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Various documents for a better understanding of the UN Minorities Declaration and good experiences in implementing its principles and provisions have been prepared and considered, especially in the former UN Working Group on Minorities.

Attached to this update is a copy of the list of papers of the former UN Working Group on Minorities and the present Independent Expert on minority issues, and the pamphlets in the UN Guide for Minorities, by theme and by country/region as well as the major studies or reports of the Sub-Commission. These documents will be available on the web site in the future at <http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/documents.htm>

Staffing at OHCHR

Rita Izsak, a former OHCHR Minority Fellow has returned to work at OHCHR for several months. She is working with the civil society unit on the OHCHR NGO database.

Rita's contact email is rizsak@ohchr.org

A further new staff member has joined the unit dealing with indigenous peoples, minorities and funds.

Having passed the National Competitive Examinations (NCE), Ilona Klímová-Alexander has joined the minorities team at the Indigenous and Minorities Unit. Ilona's PhD research (published as a book by Ashgate in 2005) at the University of Cambridge concentrated on the interaction between Romani activists and the United Nations system. She has previously worked as a consultant on minority issues for a number of intergovernmental organisations. Ilona's email is ialexander@ohchr.org.

60th Anniversary of UDHR preparations

The 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2008 is fast approaching. The commemorative year will kick off on 10 December 2007, Human Rights Day, and will extend through 2008.

The commemoration is intended to be as inclusive as possible, highlighting the role of people everywhere as the custodians and beneficiaries of the UDHR. The message is that the UDHR is a living document that can continue to inform and inspire the struggle for rights and freedoms around the world if people reclaim it and make it our own. It is an articulation of two core principles of the UDHR: **Universality and Justice**.

The commemoration will encompass the UN family, the public and private sectors, media, artists and other representatives of civil society.

Tools for understanding minority rights and issues.

OHCHR will provide substantive guidance and supporting materials, including background info, key messages and a symbol/logo.

A monthly update is being prepared on preparations for the 60th Anniversary is being prepared. The first issue will come out in August. See web site home page for latest information: www.ohchr.org

Background information to 10 December 1948 - Minority representatives may wish to recall that GA res. 217 (III) adopted on 10 December, contained several parts. Part A of that resolution was the adoption by the General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In Part C of that same resolution (GA res. 217 (III), the General Assembly laid down that the UN can not remain indifferent to minorities.

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Independent Expert on Minority Issues

Ms Gay McDougall, Independent Expert on minority issues was invited to be part of the jury for the Max van der Stoel Award. Max van der Stoel was the first High Commissioner on National Minorities of the OSCE from 1993-2001. The Max van der Stoel Award is a prize of 50,000 Euro presented biannually to an individual or institution in recognition of extraordinary and outstanding achievements aimed at improving the position of national minorities.

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Former UN Working Group on Minorities and the future

The UN Working Group on Minorities of the Sub-Commission no longer exists.

The Human Rights Council will meet in September and during its 6th session may discuss the question of any future forum or body on or for minorities.

NGOs have indicated their interest in preparing a campaign for retaining an international forum for the participation of persons belonging to minorities. Please contact or visit the websites of MRG and IMADR for further information.

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Inter-agency meeting on minorities

An inter-agency meeting on minorities is being organized for 3 September. A short Question and Answer document about minority rights and issues is under preparation for consideration at this meeting. The discussion is also likely to touch upon the question of a future UN forum for minorities.

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Future Roma workshop in Latin America

OHCHR is planning to organize a workshop in Argentina with Roma representatives from South America during the month of September.

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Treaty bodies

The **Human Rights Committee** held its 90th Session from 9 to 27 July 2007 in Geneva. It considered the following reports of States parties to ICCPR:

Zambia, Sudan and the Czech Republic.

No reference to minorities and article 27 of the ICCPR is contained in the concluding observations of Zambia and Sudan. However, in the concluding observations of Sudan it is recommended that the State party "ensure that no financial support or materiel is channeled to militias that engage in ethnic cleansing or the deliberate targeting of civilians;". Numerous references are made to Article 27 of ICCPR and the rights and situation of the Roma in the concluding observations on the Czech Republic.

More information at <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs90.htm>
