

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

TWELFTH SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP ON MINORITIES

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11 August 2006

On the basis of the discussions held during its twelfth session, the Working Group agreed on the following decisions and recommendations for future action.

**A. Future of the Working Group**

Having discussed Human Rights Council decision 2006/102, the Working Group:

*Emphasizes* the need to ensure adequate consideration of minority rights issues within the Human Rights Council and *calls* for the continuation of the Working Group or a similar expert body to ensure the provision of specialized advice on minority rights issues to the Council in the future.

*Proposes* that the sessions of this future mechanism, provided that the Human Rights Council decides to establish it, should be inter-sessional and have a duration of five working days and *recommends* that such a mechanism should ensure access to minority representatives from all regions of the world and serve as a forum for dialogue and mutual understanding on minority rights issues.

*Welcomes* the progress made and the steps taken towards the establishment of a voluntary fund to support the participation of minority representatives, especially from developing countries, in the United Nations meetings.

**B. Cooperation between the Working Group and the Independent Expert on Minorities Issues**

*Stresses* the historical opportunity that the establishment of the position of the Independent Expert on Minorities Issues and ongoing interaction with the Working Group represents in advancing the promotion and protection of the rights of minorities, in particular in the area of follow-up and thematic expertise where the complementarity is of crucial relevance.

*Notes* with appreciation the proposal made by the Independent expert to study and when appropriate take initiatives on the specific minority situations brought to the attention of the Working Group by minority representatives and Governments during its twelfth session. The Independent Expert highlighted the important contribution of the studies being undertaken by the Working Group to her annual thematic work.

In this context both the members of the Working Group and the Independent Expert *propose* a two years programme of work which includes the organization of a series of regional seminars on the application of integration with diversity in policing, security and criminal justice as a follow-up activity to the study discussed during the Working Group (E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2006/WP.1). In addition, the preparation of three thematic studies is proposed; on positive country experiences on self-government for minorities; on ways and means of strengthening the application of the United Nations Declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and on double discrimination against women belonging to minorities.

**C. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

*Recommends* that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights continues operating the fellowship programme for minorities which has proved, over its two years of existence, to be an excellent tool for building capacity among minority representatives and minority organizations on the

essence and working methods of the various human rights mechanisms and instruments. *Encourages* the Office of the High Commissioner to identify possible ways of further engaging with minority fellows once the programme is finished.

Welcoming the preparation, as requested by the Working Group, under the Minority Fellowship Programme, of a "minority profile and matrix", a tool that has been considered at its twelfth session, the Working Group *recommends* the Office of the High Commissioner to transmit it to minority organizations as an useful tool to gather substantive information and to transmit the profile and matrix to Governments for information.

**D. International, regional and national development agencies, United Nations Secretariat and specialized agencies, the World Bank and regional development banks**

*Recommends* that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Independent Expert on Minorities Issues through inter-agency cooperation call upon the various parts of the UN system, the international financial institutions, the regional banks and regional and national development agencies to effectively implement the goals and objectives of the Minorities Declaration and to recognize the importance of mainstreaming minority issues as a tool for achieving equal rights, and to actively promote the mainstreaming of minorities perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of relevant policies and programmes.