

## ***12<sup>th</sup> Session, Geneva, 28 and 29 November 2019***

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### **FACT SHEET**

#### **TWELFTH SESSION OF THE FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES**

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##### **1. General Information on the Forum on Minority Issues**

- The Forum on Minority Issues is an **annual meeting** convened in Geneva, Switzerland. This year's forum is convened on **28 and 29 November 2019 in Palais des Nations, E Building, Room XX**.
- A **Preparatory Meeting** for all participants will be held on **Wednesday 27 November 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Palais des Nations A Building, Room VII**.
- The Forum is organized under the leadership of the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues.
- The Forum identifies practices, challenges, opportunities and initiatives for the further implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.
- The Forum is an important platform for promoting dialogue and cooperation on issues pertaining to persons belonging to minorities, and provides thematic contributions and expertise to the work of the Special Rapporteur.
- Participants include states, United Nations mechanisms, bodies and specialized agencies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations and mechanisms in the field of human rights, national human rights institutions and other relevant national bodies, academics and experts on minority issues, representatives of minorities and minority and non-governmental organizations.

##### **2. The Theme of the Twelfth Session of the Forum**

- This year the Forum's theme is "Education, Language and the Human Rights of Minorities".
- The Forum will be structured around **four thematic panel discussions**:
  - *Human rights and minority language education.*
  - *Public policy objectives for education in, and the teaching of, minority languages.*
  - *Effective practices for education in, and the teaching of, minority languages.*
  - *Language, education and the empowerment of minority women and girls.*
- The Forum encourages wide participation from states, national human rights institutions, civil society representatives, as well as regional and international organizations and other stakeholders.
- This Forum also encourages the participation of persons belonging to minorities, organizations and individuals working on the issue of education in and teaching of minority languages, as well as representatives of linguistic minorities, who wish to make their voice heard at the UN and make a difference for their communities.

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- Participants are encouraged to share recommendations on the theme of the Forum as well as on the topics of thematic panel discussions.

### **3. Registration for Participation at the Twelfth session of the Forum**

- All participants are required to register for the Forum using an online registration system. Registrations will be open from **2 September** and will close **22 November 2019** ***No application will be accepted after this date.*** The link for registration is: **<https://reg.unog.ch/event/19367>**.
- Participants will need to create a profile and complete the online registration before receiving confirmation of their registration by the Forum Secretariat. Any issues arising during the registration process can be addressed to **[FMI-registration@ohchr.org](mailto:FMI-registration@ohchr.org)**
- Confirmed participants **will receive a QR code** by email. The **QR code** will be scanned by UN Security upon arrival in order to issue a **badge of accreditation** to the UN premises.
- Some participants may need a visa to be able to travel to Switzerland.

Please note that Forum participants will need to **plan** and **fund** their travels to Geneva. Participants are also responsible for organizing their own visas, if necessary.

### **4. Online Registration for the List of Speakers**

- Participants, who wish to take the floor under one of the panel discussions, are invited to register in advance through the **online registration** link that will be available on the Forum webpage (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Minority/Pages/Session12.aspx>) on **22 November 2019**. The **online registration** for the List of Speakers **will close 27 November 2019 at 4:00 p.m.**
- Please, kindly note, that due to a very large number of participants and limited time available for statements, each organization **shall be given the floor once**, and may get a second opportunity to make a statement under a different agenda item **if time permits**.
- Participants, who may not get the chance to register online, will still have the opportunity to register during the Forum in room XX by approaching the Secretariat and writing down their names in the List of Speakers.
- **However**, please, note that due to a very high number of participants wishing to take the floor during the Forum, the participants who registered online in advance will be given priority. Participants who register during the Forum in room XX will be given the floor **if additional time remains**.
- **Please note that only participants duly registered for the event will be given the floor.**

### **5. How to engage with the Forum?**

- Each panel discussion of the Forum will be composed of a moderator and panelists.

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- The moderator, for each session, will introduce the topic and the panelists. The moderator will initially give the floor to the panelists, and then the Chairperson of the Forum will provide the opportunity to participants to contribute to the discussion.
- The panelists, three to four per session, will introduce the discussion through an intervention, which shall not exceed 10 minutes.
- Oral interventions by participants will have to **adhere strictly to the topic under discussion**. Participants will have opportunities to answer to specific questions asked by the moderator.
- The Chairperson will seek to ensure regional, gender and institutional balance of interventions from the floor.
- For each session, the moderator will attempt to formulate recommendations based on the discussions.
- The session will be webcast and streamed live on UN Web TV: <http://webtv.un.org/>
- Participants, as well as individuals and organizations who will not be able to attend the Forum in person, will have the possibility to contribute to the discussions by sending a **written submission** that includes proposal for recommendations at the following email address: [\*\*minorityforum@ohchr.org\*\*](mailto:minorityforum@ohchr.org)

### **6. How to prepare for the Forum?**

- Participants are encouraged to read the **provisional agenda and the concept note** of the Forum, the **provisional program of work**, and other materials which will be made available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Minority/Pages/Session12.aspx>
- Participating organizations are encouraged to consider sending **representatives of minorities** to participate in the Forum.
- All participants are encouraged to reflect upon key issues **or recommendations** in connection with the topics for each of the thematic sessions.

Participants are also encouraged to attend the **Preparatory Meeting on Wednesday 27 November from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** in Palais des Nations **Room VII** during which the Special Rapporteur and the Chairperson of the Twelfth session of the Forum will welcome all participants and explain the rules of procedure.

### **7. Preparatory Meeting**

- The Preparatory Meeting will be convened from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on **Wednesday 27 November** in Palais des Nations **Room VII**.
- The meeting is open to all participants of the Forum and will provide guidance for participants to ensure a harmonious and successful discussion during the Forum.

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- In the time remaining after the presentation of the rules of procedures for the Forum, civil society organizations may take the **opportunity to share with the Special Rapporteur information on situations, which do not fall within this year's thematic focus of the Forum.**

### **8. Side Events**

- Participants may organize **side events** to further contribute to discussions **relating to the theme of the Twelfth session of the Forum on Minority Issues**, particularly with a view to sharing information on strategies, challenges, activities and best practices in the area.
- There are very limited number of rooms available to be allocated for side events, and these rooms are being allocated on "first come, first served" basis.
- **The Secretariat is not responsible** for the side events organized during the Forum. States and NGOs hosting a parallel event are responsible for the content of the event and the conduct of the participants.
- State and NGO side-events are **public meetings** and may therefore be attended by all Permanent Missions, NGOs and other civil society representatives, UN staff and other participants with access to Palais des Nations.

### **9. What is the outcome of the Forum on Minority Issues?**

- Forum participants will, during the course of the Forum, identify a number of **recommendations** with the view of effectively addressing the issue of *education in and teaching of minority languages* through the promotion and protection of the human rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.
- The **recommendations** will be compiled in a **report** which will be presented by the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues to the **43<sup>rd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council** in March 2020.
- The Chair of the Forum will prepare a **summary report** of the discussions, which will be made available on the webpage of the Forum after its conclusion.