

FACT SHEET 13th Session of the Forum on Minority Issues, Geneva, 19 and 20 November 2020

Thirteenth session of the Forum on Minority Issues, Geneva, 19 and 20 November 2020

INFORMATION NOTE

1. General Information on the Forum on Minority Issues

- The annual Forum on Minority Issues will be held on **19 and 20 November 2020**.
- Due to travel restrictions as well as physical distancing measures in place, the Forum will be held virtually through the interprefy platform.
- The Forum is guided by the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Dr. Fernand de Varennes and will be chaired by Dr Natalie Alkiviadou from Cyprus.
- 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. In order to facilitate online registration for those who planned on attending in person (no longer an option due to sanitary restrictions), the deadline to register and for the list of speakers has been extended until 6PM Friday 13 November.

2. The Theme of the 13th Session of the Forum

- This year the Forum's theme is "**Hate speech, Social Media and Minorities**".
- The Forum will be structured around four thematic panel discussions:
 - ***Causes, scale and impact of hate speech targeting minorities in social media***
 - ***International legal and institutional framework***
 - ***Regulation of online hate speech: the role and responsibility of intergovernmental organizations, States, internet companies and social media platforms***
 - ***Towards a safer space for minorities: positive initiatives to address online hate speech: the role of national human rights institutions, human rights organizations, civil society and other stakeholders***
- Participants are encouraged to share recommendations on the theme of the Forum as well as on the topics of thematic panel discussions.

3. How to engage with the Forum?

- The panellists, three to four per session, will introduce the discussion through an intervention, which shall not exceed 7 minutes.
- Oral interventions by participants (or in the event that an oral intervention is not possible, video statements) will have to adhere strictly to the topic under discussion.
- The Chairperson will seek to ensure regional, gender and institutional balance of interventions from the floor.
- Registered participants who do not wish to make a statement can follow the event through the interprefy platform.

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- Participants, as well as individuals and organizations who will not be able to participate in the Forum, can contribute to the discussions by sending a written submission that includes proposal for recommendations at the following email address: minorityforum@ohchr.org

4. 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 available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Minority/Pages/Session13.aspx>
- All participants are encouraged to reflect upon key issues or recommendations in connection with the topics for each of the thematic sessions.

5. What is the outcome of the Forum on Minority Issues?

- During the course of the Forum, participants will identify a number of recommendations to effectively address the issue of hate speech, social media and minorities.
- The recommendations will be compiled in a report that will be presented by the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues to the 46th session of the Human Rights Council in March 2021.
- 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.

6. Modalities for participation: Novel format – virtual

- **Due to the current sanitary restrictions in place with regard to physical meetings in Geneva, Switzerland, the 2020 Forum will be held virtually.**
- All participants are encouraged to join virtually.

7. Registration and list of speakers

- All participants require to be registered in order to participate and take the floor. **Only one delegate per Member State and one representative per civil society organisation can be included on the speakers' list under each of the sessions.**
- Registration for the list of speakers will be closed on 15 November at 6:00 PM.
- Please note that only participants registered for the event will be able to also register for the list of speakers.
- The list of speakers will be finalised based on the number of those requesting the floor for each session.

8. Other useful information

- The forum [webpage](#) will also include the provisional agenda, information related to registration for the Forum and list of speakers.
- As in previous years, interpretation will be provided in all six official languages of the United Nations and plenary sessions will be webcasted.



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- Any questions or requests for information should be addressed to the Secretariat of the Forum on Minority Issues, Special Procedures Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at minorityforum@ohchr.org.