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EMRIP held first interactive dialogue with HRC

The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) conducted its first interactive dialogue with the Human Rights Council (HRC) at its 18th session in September 2011.

The work of the Expert Mechanism was presented by the Chairperson, Vital Bambanze, and Wilton Littlechild, who then took questions and comments from states and Human Rights Council accredited organisations. The interactive dialogue provided a rich opportunity for the Expert Mechanism to engage directly with states on its work in an open and transparent format.

The interactive dialogue, conducted together with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya, was authorised in the Human Rights Council's resolution 15/7 of 2010.

The interactive dialogue was followed by a three hour-panel devoted to the role of languages and culture in the protection and promotion of the rights and identity of indigenous peoples, in which Vital Bambanze also participated. The panel, coupled with the interactive dialogues with the Expert Mechanism and Special Rapporteur, meant that the Human Rights Council devoted a significant portion of its time to indigenous peoples' issues.

The Human Rights Council adopted resolution 18/8 entitled Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples. The resolution:

- ◆ welcomes the work of the Expert Mechanism;

- ◆ welcomes EMRIP practice of devoting specific time to the discussion of updates relevant to past mandated thematic studies;
- ◆ encourages states to consider initiating and strengthening, as appropriate, legislative and policy measures that prioritise education in the design and implementation of national development strategies affecting indigenous peoples, on the basis of the past EMRIP advice;
- ◆ welcomes the completion of EMRIP final study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision making and the inclusion of good practices in the study;
- ◆ requests EMRIP to continue to build on its previous studies, including its study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision-making;
- ◆ also requests EMRIP to prepare a study on the role of languages and culture in the promotion and protection of the rights and identity of indigenous peoples; and
- ◆ further requests EMRIP to undertake, with the assistance of OHCHR, a questionnaire to seek the views of States on best practices regarding possible appropriate measures and implementation strategies in order to attain the goals of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- ◆ requests the Expert Mechanism to contribute to the exploration of the modalities for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014.

HRC Resolution 18/8: http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/18/8

UNIPP Policy Board Approves Seven Proposals

The United Nations Indigenous Peoples Partnership (UNIPP) Policy Board reviewed and approved six country projects and one regional programme at its second Policy Board meeting in New York.

At the meeting, which was held on 27-28 October, the Board approved UN country programmes for Bolivia, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Congo, Nepal and Nicaragua, as well as a regional program for Southeast Asia.

The approved programs have been designed in consultation with indigenous peoples' organisations and tackle various issues:

- ◆ In Bolivia, UNIPP will support legislative development and implementation of the 'right to consultation' and participation of indigenous peoples with an emphasis on highly vulnerable indigenous peoples.
- ◆ Nicaragua programme focuses on strengthening of knowledge and consultative mechanisms for indigenous peoples in order to facilitate implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous Peoples (ILO 169).
- ◆ In Cameroon, UNIPP will support legal and institutional reforms with a view to enhancing free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples.
- ◆ Central African Republic programme will support Government's review of laws, policies, and services to implement ILO 169 on indigenous peoples and provisions of the UNDRIP.
- ◆ Republic of Congo programme will support the implementation of the national law on indigenous peoples along with advocacy for ratification of ILO 169.
- ◆ In Nepal, UNIPP will support the implementation of the ILO 169 and UNDRIP through local monitoring, planning and budgeting committees.
- ◆ South East Asia project aims to support a continuation of the Regional Indigenous Peoples' Program with a focus on review of laws, and national/regional dialogues on land rights and natural resources related to indigenous peoples.

More info: <http://tinyurl.com/UNIPP>

Nepal: Access to Justice for Dalits

Marcia V.J. Kran, Director of the OHCHR Research and Right to Development Division and IPMS participated in the launch of the report "Opening the Door to Equality: Access to Justice for Dalits in Nepal," held in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 14 December.

The report, prepared by OHCHR Nepal, is a culmination of five years of work in the country and focuses on 20 emblematic cases of caste-based discrimination which the Office looked into.

The report recognizes progress made by Nepal in combating caste-based discrimination, including the commitments made during its first UPR review earlier this year, the adoption of the Untouchability Act in May 2011 and a number of judicial decisions sentencing perpetrators of caste based discrimination and untouchability to imprisonment. At the same time, the report identifies the challenges and obstacles that continue to prevent victims from access-

ing the justice system, such as low levels of awareness that caste-based discrimination is a crime; lack of appropriate support from law enforcement agencies; and the social and economic factors that further hinder progress, such as poverty.

Marcia Kran reiterated in her opening statement the words of Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: "caste is the very negation of human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination. It condemns individuals from birth and their communities to a life of exploitation, violence, social exclusion and segregation. Caste discrimination is not only a human rights violation, but also exposes those affected to other abuses of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights".

Launch of the report also fell within the period of the 100 Day Campaign 'I Commit to End Caste Based Discrimination and Untouchability', see www.100daysagainstcastediscrimination.com.

UNDRIP Handbook Validation Meeting

IPMS organized in New York jointly with the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) a meeting to validate the draft of a Handbook for Parliamentarians on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The meeting, which took place on 25 and 26 October, was chaired by the Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Dr. Myrna Cunningham, and saw the participation of indigenous experts and parliamentarians, along with project partners: UNDP, Inter-Parliamentary Union, and UNPFII Secretariat.

A final version of the Handbook is expected in mid-2012.

NHRIs in Latin America considered advance draft of a Guide on the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples

IPMS partnered with the ILO, UNDP, UNICEF and WHO to organize a consultation with 15 National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in Latin America to discuss on how NHRIs could advance indigenous people's rights in their work.

The meeting brought together representatives of the *Defensorias del Pueblo* from Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela in a five-day meeting which took place in Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia from 24 to 28 October 2011. The meeting discussed several issues

including health, conflict prevention, indigenous children, and the human rights of indigenous peoples under the ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples No. 169 and the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples (UN Declaration), two mutually reinforcing international instruments. In addition, participants shared real life experiences of the rights contained in ILO 169 or the UN Declaration and practical examples of work that their institutions have done to promote education and awareness raising; complaints handling, mediation or conflict resolution; public inquiries on specific rights; legislative inquiries or law reforms; engagement with international or regional mechanisms;

and work in partnerships with indigenous peoples.

IPMS also shared an advance draft of a Guide currently drafted in cooperation with the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and the Australian Human Rights Commission on how NHRIs can advance the rights contained in the UN Declaration. Very useful inputs and comments received during the meeting will be reflected in the preparation of the Guide. The meeting agreed on a road map for 2012 which includes specific areas for actions by NHRIs in the sub-region.

More info: [Samia Slimane at slimane@ohchr.org](mailto:Samia.Slimane@ohchr.org)

UNCTs engaged in dialogue with indigenous peoples and Government of the Republic of Congo to discuss the implementation of the Indigenous Law

In its report on the situation of the rights of indigenous peoples in the Republic of Congo which followed his visit to the country in November 2010, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples urged the UN country team to follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report, in full cooperation with the Government agencies concerned, and involving indigenous peoples of Congo. Further, the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) should ensure that awareness about indigenous peoples and their rights is integrated into all planning processes with regards to programmes and initiatives developed by the UN system in Congo.

In response to the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur, and as part of the rolling-out of the UNDG Guidelines on indigenous peoples' issues, UNICEF in Congo, under the coordination of the Resident Coordinator, co-organized a five-day training workshop on indig-

enous issues with UNDP and UNFPA. IPMS representative participated as a resource trainer together with the ILO and the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The training workshop brought together UNCTs colleagues from UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, OHCHR, UNESCO, FAO WHO, IOM, HCR, UNAIDS, WFP as well as 16 Governmental and parliamentarians' representatives and 21 indigenous representatives from nine different provinces. Mr Simon M'Vi-boudoulou, member of the PFII also participated.

In addition to presentations on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and its complementarity with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the training covered the jurisprudence of the African Commission and the activities of its Working Group on indigenous populations/communities; an overview of mechanisms available at international level to address indigenous issues - PFII, EMRIP, UPR and the SR's

recommendations; National Action Plan on the Improvement of the Quality of Life of Indigenous Peoples (2009-2013) and the Law No. 5-2011 to promote and protect the rights of indigenous populations, promulgated by the President in February 2011. The participants identified a series of actions to be undertaken in partnership with all actors in the country, some of which are already included in the National Plan of Action.

The meeting concluded *inter alia* with the recommendations to discuss further the international requirements related to the right of indigenous peoples to be consulted through their own representative institutions and the need for practical guidance to assist the Government in its efforts to implement the Law on indigenous populations in partnership with the indigenous communities in Congo.

More info: [Samia Slimane at sslimane@ohchr.org](mailto:Samia.Slimane@ohchr.org)

Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples

Examination of specific cases of human rights violations:

- ◆ The Special Rapporteur (SR) continued to send letters to various governments regarding specific situations of human right violations.
- ◆ In a statement of 20 December, the SR expressed his concern regarding the reportedly dire social and economic conditions of the Attawapiskat First Nation, which seemingly exemplifies the conditions of many aboriginal communities in Canada. ([link](#))
- ◆ In a statement of 28 October, the SR warned that a proposal by certain members of Parliament to repeal key laws and policies related to Sami people in Norway could “constitute an enormous setback for the recognition and protection of human rights in the country.” ([link](#))
- ◆ On 27 September, the SR issued a warning about the situation of growing social tensions in Bolivia generated by the march of about 1,500 indigenous people against the construction of a highway through indigenous territory and national park Isiboro Secure (TIPNIS). ([link](#))
- ◆ On 25 August, the SR congratu-

lated Peru for its passage of a consultation law for indigenous peoples. ([link](#))

Country Assessments:

- ◆ Between 27 November and 7 December, the SR carried out a visit to Argentina. In a statement following the visit, the SR urged Argentina to give higher priority to indigenous issues. ([link](#))

Promotion of good practices:

- ◆ In early November in Paris, the SR participated in UNESCO’s launching of its work developing a policy on indigenous peoples.
- ◆ On 31 October, the SR met with various NGOs, and in a statement following the meetings, emphasized they should put effort into building indigenous peoples’ negotiation capacities in face of extractive industries.
- ◆ In September, the SR participated in an in-depth dialogue with representatives of the Government of Brazil in Brasilia, providing an overview of the duty of States to consult with indigenous peoples.

Presentations of Annual Reports:

- ◆ On 17 October, the SR presented his third annual report to the

Third Committee of the UN General Assembly in New York.

- ◆ On 20 and 21 September, the SR presented his fourth annual report to the Human Rights Council (HRC). In his report, the SR provided an overview of the work he has carried out over the past year, and offered some comments on his study on extractive industries operating in or near indigenous lands. ([link](#))
- ◆ The SR presented to the HRC various reports:
 - 1) cases examined;
 - 2) the situation of Sami people in the Sápmi region of Norway, Sweden and Finland;
 - 3) the situation of indigenous peoples affected by extractive industries in Guatemala;
 - 4) the situation of indigenous peoples in New Zealand;
 - 5) the situation of indigenous peoples in Congo;
 - 6) measures needed to secure indigenous peoples’ land and resource rights in Suriname; and
 - 7) the situation of indigenous communities affected by the el Diquis hydroelectric project in Costa Rica.

More info: www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/SRIndigenousPeoples/Pages/SRIPeoplesIndex.aspx

UN Voluntary Funds supported by IPMS

UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations

Deadlines within the 2011-2012 grant cycles are now all closed. The next session of the Board of Trustees of the Fund will take place from 6 to 10 February 2012. The list of selected beneficiaries as well as the new grant cycle will be announced on 27 February 2012.

The mandate of the Fund was expanded in order to facilitate the participation of representatives of indigenous peoples’ organizations in sessions of the Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review and of treaty bodies. The first beneficiaries were thus able, in 2011, to participate in their sessions. ([website of the Fund](#))

UN Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

The Board of Trustees of the Fund held its 16th session from 28 November to 5 December. This was the first session the Board held in its new composition: Virginia Herrera Murillo (chairperson, from Costa Rica), Klara Skrivankova (the Czech Republic), Asma Jahangir (Pakistan), George Omona (Uganda) and Mike Dottridge (UK).

The experts reviewed the applications for project grants to be disbursed in 2012 and reviewed Fund policies. Organisations selected for funding will be contacted in January 2012 and the list of selected projects will be published on the Fund’s website.

20th Anniversary Celebration Event

The Secretariat of the Fund also organised, on 2 December, an event commemorating the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the UN Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

Gulnara Shahinian, the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, was among the panellists at the event, which focused on emerging trends and challenges related to contemporary forms of slavery as well as selected success stories from the field. ([website of the Fund](#))

4th session of the Forum on minority issues

The 4th session of the Forum on minority issues focusing on the topic "Guaranteeing the rights of minority women" took place from 29 to 30 November 2011 in Geneva and brought together over 400 participants representing UN agencies, Member States, and the civil society.

The session was opened by the President of the Human Rights Council, H.E. Ms. Laura Dupuy Lasserre, and chaired by Ms. Graciela J. Dixon C., former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Panama. Rita Izsak, the Independent Expert on minority issues who guides the work of the Forum, addressed the Forum through a video message.

Consistent with the contents of the concept note submitted by the Independent Expert (A/HRC/FMI/2011/2) the Forum examined the proposition that "women belonging to minorities frequently experience unique chal-

lenges and multiple or intersecting forms of discrimination emanating from their status as members of minorities and as women or girls. This may make minority women and girls particularly vulnerable to violations and the denial of their rights in both public and private life."

The discussions will be captured in action-oriented recommendations, which will be made available on the Forum webpage, and the implementation of which will aim at increasing effective participation of minority women.

OHCHR Side Event

During the Forum, OHCHR organized a side event entitled "Empowering Minority Women to Claim Their Rights: Identifying effective practices".

The side event complemented the work of the Forum through a focused consideration to how minority women empower themselves and

can be empowered by others in very practical and concrete ways, both within their communities and in the wider society.

Welcome address was given by Ms. Isha L. Dyfan, Chief, OHCHR Women's Human Rights and Gender Section; and invited panelists were Ms. Mercedes Barquet (Member of the WG on Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice, Mexico), Ms. Atieno Junnipher Kere (Executive Director, Women In Fishing Industry Programme, Kenya), Ms. Renu Sijapati (Feminist Dalit Organization, Nepal), Ms. Beata Bislim Olahova (Roma Education Fund, Slovakia), and Mr. Leonardo Reales Martinez (Ethnic Rights Consultant for AFROLATINOS and ECODESARROLLO, Colombia).

More info: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/minority/session4.htm>

Inter-Agency Group on Minorities annual meeting

IPMS hosted the 7th meeting of the Inter-Agency Group on Minorities (IAGM), bringing together OHCHR staff members, the then newly appointed Independent Expert on minority issues, Rita Izsak, and representatives of several UN agencies.

At the meeting, which took place on 4 October in Geneva, the participants discussed the work on minority issues as conducted by their respective agencies, and placed much emphasis on the importance of events in 2012, which will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Minorities Declaration.

Rita Izsak introduced her vision for the mandate she holds; IAGM participants were also updated as to the preparations of the 4th session of the Forum on Minority Issues.

Aim of the IAGM is to maintain coordination in the work on the promotion and protection of minority rights throughout the UN System.

Strasbourg: Training workshop on minorities and development

IPMS participated in a training workshop on "Minorities and Development" organised by UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre in cooperation with Minority Rights Group International in Strasbourg, France, on 17-18 November.

The joint training, first of its kind in the region, was based on a UNDP Resource Guide and toolkit on Marginalized Minorities in Development Programming released globally in 2010. Based also on the findings of the workshop training, UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre will develop a work plan on the promotion and protection of minority rights in the Europe and the CIS region for 2012 and beyond.

UNDP Bratislava: <http://europeandcis.undp.org/>

Resource Guide and toolkit:
http://www.beta.undp.org/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/human_rights/marginalised-minorities-in-development-programming-a-resource-guide-and-toolkit.html

Independent Expert on minority issues

Ms. Rita Izsak assumed her functions as the Independent Expert on minority issues on 1 August 2011. Ms. Izsák has a decade of minority rights activism and has worked before in various capacities with NGOs, at the UN, OSCE and the Hungarian government, where she coordinated the creation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.

Statements:

On 29 November, the Independent Expert on minority issues addressed the 4th session of the Forum on minority issues with welcoming remarks. ([video statement](#))

On 1 November, a group of United Nations independent experts, including the Independent Expert on minority issues (IE), voiced grave concern over reports of heavy security measures, in and around the area of the Tibetan Buddhist Kirti monastery - which houses some 2,500 monks- and other monasteries in Aba County, an area of Sichuan province with many ethnic Tibetans in south-west China. ([full statement](#))

On 25 October, the IE welcomed the 3rd International Conference on Roma Women held during 23-25 October 2011 in Granada, Spain. "Roma women must recognize and confront the challenges and barriers that exist even within their communities, and many of you are doing so and courageously confronting discrimination wherever it exists. As fellow Roma women leaders and rights advocates I applaud your efforts." said the Independent Expert. ([full statement](#))

On 5 August, the IE on minority issues, together with the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, called on the United Kingdom Government to find a peaceful and appropriate solution, and adequate alternative housing for 86 Irish Traveller families faced with forced eviction from Dale Farm, Essex. ([full statement](#))

More info: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/IEExpert/Pages/IEminorityissuesIndex.aspx>

OHCHR Fellowship Programmes

Indigenous Fellowship

The deadlines for applications for the 2012 OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme have passed.

The office is now in the process of selecting one person to fill a senior fellow position and several persons in four language categories (English, French, Spanish, Russian) to fill positions of fellows. Shortlisted candidates have been contacted, the selection is almost finalised.

English and French linguistic component of the 2012 programme will take place in Geneva from 11 June to 13 July 2012. Participants of the Spanish and Russian programme, which also have regional components in Bilbao, Spain, and Moscow, Russia, will start their programme in Geneva on 18 June 2012.

More information:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/fellowship.htm>

Minorities Fellowship

The 2011 OHCHR Minorities Fellowship Programme took place in Geneva from 14 November to 16 December 2011.

Nine fellows from Canada, Serbia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mauritania and Yemen participated in the two linguistic components of the programme (English and Arabic), and also participated in the 4th session of the Forum on minority issues.

The office also, for the first time, hosted a senior minorities fellow, Ms Gulazat Tursun from the Uyghur minority in China.

Calls for application for 2012 OHCHR Minorities Fellowship Programme will be published tentatively in Spring 2012.

More information:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/Pages/Fellowship.aspx>

Fellowship for people of African descent

Call for applications for 2012 OHCHR Fellowship Programme for People of African Descent is now open; deadline 15. 01. 2012.

Who can apply?

- ◆ The candidate must be an African descendant living in the Diaspora.
- ◆ The candidate must have a minimum of 4 years of experience related to the human rights of People of African Descent.
- ◆ The candidate must be fluent in the English language to be able to participate fully in the programme.
- ◆ The candidate is nominated by an organization working on issues related to People of African Descent or minority rights.

More information:

www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/IYPADFellowshipProgramme.aspx

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (HC), was vocal in defence, promotion and protection of indigenous peoples' and minority rights also in the second half of 2011.

She issued a statement on 9 August, the International Day of the World's Indigenous People, highlighting the fact that "many of the estimated 370 million indigenous peoples around the world have lost, or are under imminent threat of losing, their ancestral lands, territories and natural resources because of unfair and unjust exploitation for the sake of 'development.'" ([full statement](#)).

In her opening statement at the 18th session of the Human Rights Council on 12 September, the HC stressed it is imperative "we examine and address the potential repercussions of economic upheavals on those people who are already living in precarious and marginalized situations, such as...minorities, indigenous peoples..." ([full statement](#))

On 14 September the HC, in a statement at the Human Rights Council panel emphasized "There is a crucial need to uphold the

rights of indigenous peoples, minorities, persons with disabilities, older persons and other marginalized groups, whose welfare is often bypassed or deliberately forfeited in the pursuit of short-sighted economic growth policies." ([full statement](#))

On 22 September, in her opening address to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), the HC reminded that the DDPA "speaks of the plight of minorities, such as the Roma, of people of African and of Asian descent, of migrants and indigenous peoples." ([full statement](#))

OHCHR expressed deep concern about the anti-Roma demonstrations that have been occurring in Bulgaria on 4 October. ([briefing note](#)) The office also urged the Egyptian authorities on 11 October, to ensure the protection of all, including minority groups, in their rightful exercise of their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression. ([briefing note](#)) In her statement to the General Assembly at its 66th session on 19

October, the HC highlighted two new publications on minority issues and drew attention to the launch of UNIPP. ([full statement](#))

On 4 November, at the conclusion of her mission to Moldova, the HC held a press conference at which she encouraged strengthened minority language use in the media, protection of linguistic minorities, and expressed concern at attacks on, and stigmatization of, various religious minorities, especially Muslims, Jews, Protestants and Jehovah's Witnesses, and also similar problems facing people of African descent. ([full statement](#))

Deputy High Commissioner

Kyung-wha Kang, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, conducted missions to Paraguay ([full statement](#)), Chile ([full statement](#)), and Uruguay ([full statement](#)), to gather first-hand information on the situation of human rights and encourage the authorities to strengthen the inclusion of human rights in their political agendas. In her statements at the end of the missions, she particularly draw attention to the situation of indigenous peoples and people of African descent.

Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council

Moldova: Fostering a public culture of diversity

Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, visited the Republic of Moldova, including its Transnistrian region, from 1 to 8 September 2011.

In his statement after the mission he noted that he was "particularly struck by obstacles deriving mainly from the overly predominant position of the Orthodox Church, which enjoys a privileged status at variance with the Constitutional guarantee of a secular state." He called upon the Government to take leadership in fostering a public culture of diversity, by issuing a robust anti-discrimination law. ([full statement](#))

Morocco and Western Sahara: Better promote cultural diversity

Independent Expert in the field of cultural rights, Farida Shaheed, at the conclusion of her mission to Morocco (5-16 September) urged the Government to promote cultural rights and diversity in the country, by expanding current initiatives and reaching all cultural communities, including minorities.

"The new Constitution places greater emphasis on cultural rights and diversity and confers an official status to the languages of the Amazigh population, and I call upon the government to make a tangible reality of these commitments..." ([full statement](#))

Kazakhstan: Investing in inclusive education crucial

Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Kishore Singh, visited Kazakhstan from 12 to 20 September to collect first-hand information on the situation of education in the country.

At the end of his visit, the special rapporteur commended Kazakhstan's efforts to ensure education in different languages and called for enhanced support to minority language schools. "One of the strengths of Kazakhstan is its unique cultural diversity and education in multiple languages is essential to preserve and promote such a precious asset." ([full statement](#))

Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council cont.

Minorities denied their right to safe water and sanitation

Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, released her mission reports on the United States of America, Japan and Slovenia.

During her mission to Japan (20-28 July 2010), Ms. de Albuquerque focused on the enjoyment of the rights to water and to sanitation in relation to poverty, homelessness, persons with disabilities, the situation of underserved persons of Korean descent, and prisoners. She explains: "I met an old woman near Kyoto, who lived in a community with no sewage system. This woman, almost 90 years old, still had to collect her water from a well; she did not have piped water in her house. And why did this happen? It happened because she belongs to a minority, she belongs to a Korean minority and because the community she lives in is entrenched in a legal dispute over the ownership of the land where they are living at." ([link to the three reports](#))

Adequate housing: Minorities often suffer disproportionately

Raquel Rolnik, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, presented her annual report to the General Assembly on 21 October.

"Discrimination affects the impacts of disasters and the way these are addressed," the UN expert on the right to adequate housing stressed. "All too often informal settlers, the poorest, ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, women, lose their lives, their homes, their land, to a disproportionate degree. In the wake of a disaster, they do not always benefit from disaster assistance as other groups do."

Governments must ensure disaster recovery efforts are not conducted the detriment of the most vulnerable, she added. ([full statement](#))

SR Report: HR violations in Iran

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, presented on 19 October his first report to the UN General Assembly, and outlined his efforts to establish a dialogue with the country.

The report documents violations of human rights reported in the initial weeks of the rapporteur's work by victims seeking to voice their experiences in the country. The cases detail practices that amount to torture, cruel, or degrading treatment of political activists, journalists, students, artists, lawyers, and environmental activists. The report also presents denial of freedom of assembly, women's rights, the rights of religious and ethnic minorities by the Government.

"I issued several communications to the Iranian authorities to introduce myself and express my interest in visiting the country," he said reiterating his appeal to the authorities to extend its full co-operation with his mandate. ([full statement](#))

Albania: UN expert urges protection of the rights of migrants

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, François Crépeau, urged* Albania to further ensure the protection of the rights of Albanian migrants living abroad or returning, as well as arriving foreigners.

"The conditions of circular migration of the Roma population with neighbouring States should be given particular attention as their social status renders them vulnerable to exploitation," the expert said. "There is urgent need to sensitize all sectors of society on the human rights of migrants and about the responsibility of the State to respect, protect, fulfil and promote their rights."

Mr. Crépeau also encouraged the European Union to strengthen the human rights component of its technical assistance to Albania on her path towards European integration. ([full statement](#))

SR on the Bedouin in OPT

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT), Richard Falk, urged the Government of Israel to adopt guidelines for the protection of Palestinian children living under occupation who are arrested or detained, in line with international humanitarian and human rights standards.

Mr. Falk noted that insecurity of Palestinian children is aggravated in the West Bank by settler violence and night time raids and detentions by Israeli occupation forces, house demolitions, threatened expulsions, and other practices.

The rapporteur also addressed the plight of the Bedouin. "The Bedouin community has been victimized by more than 62 years of occupation, in which has endured severe marginalization," Mr. Falk said noting that serious concerns have been raised recently about an Israeli plan to forcibly displace Bedouin Communities in Area C of the West Bank. ([full statement](#))

SR on freedom of opinion and expression on OPT and Israel

Special Rapporteur Frank La Rue urged the authorities of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT) to lift all restrictions to freedom of expression, stressing that "truly democratic societies are measured by their respect of human rights, and in particular the right to freedom of expression..."

During his visit to the city of Be'er Sheva, the special rapporteur was informed that the Bedouin community lack clubs, meeting places and public places of worship for dialogue, cultural expressions and exchange of ideas and views.

The special rapporteur highlighted that that freedom of expression does not only include expression of views that are widely accepted by the majority of the population or reflect the Government's policies, but also minority views and dissenting opinions. ([full statement](#))

Treaty bodies

Human Rights Committee (HRC)
HRC held its 103rd session from 17 October to 4 November in Geneva. Minorities were explicitly mentioned in the committee's concluding observations of Kuwait. In its concluding observations on Norway, the committee regretted the persistence of hate speech against the Sami people, as well as xenophobic, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic statements. Minority issues also significantly feature in the concluding observations of Iran. ([session website](#))

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
CESCR held its 47th session from 14 November to 2 December in Geneva. The rights of indigenous peoples were mentioned in the concluding observations of Argentina, Cameroon, Israel (on the Bedouin), and minority issues were raised in the concluding observations of Estonia, Turkmenistan. ([session website](#))

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
CERD held its 79th session from 8 August to 2 September in Geneva. Minority issues were raised in the concluding observations of Albania, the Czech Republic, Georgia, the Ukraine and the UK. Both indigenous and minority issues were raised for Kenya, and Paraguay. ([session website](#))

On 2 September, CERD expressed deep regret at the insistence of authorities in the United Kingdom to proceed with the eviction of Gypsy and Traveller families at the Dale Farm in Essex before providing culturally appropriate alternative accommodation to them. ([full statement](#))

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
CEDAW held its 50th session from 3 to 21 October in Geneva. Minority concerns were raised in the con-

cluding observations of Montenegro, indigenous issues were raised for Paraguay. ([session website](#))

Committee against Torture (CAT)
CAT held its 47th session from 31 October to 25 November in Geneva. Minority issues were brought to the fore in the concluding observations of Bulgaria, and indigenous issues in the concluding observations of Paraguay. ([session website](#))

Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
CRC held its 58th session from 19 September to 7 October in Geneva. Minority concerns were raised in the concluding observations of Italy, the Seychelles, Syrian Arab Republic. Indigenous and minority issues were raised for Panama, and Republic of Korea. ([session website](#))

More info: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx

Universal Periodic Review

UPR Working Group

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group held its 12th session between 3 and 14 October. The following countries were reviewed: Tajikistan, Tanzania, Antigua and Barbuda, Swaziland, Trinidad and Tobago, Thailand, Ireland, Togo, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela, Iceland, Zimbabwe, Lithuania, Uganda, Timor Leste and Moldova.*

First cycle concluded in 2011

With the 12th session of the working group, the Human Rights Council concluded the first cycle of the UPR review process. The second cycle, which will last for 4.5 years, will begin in 2012 with the 13th session (21 May-4 June 2012), in which Bahrain, Ecuador, Tunisia, Morocco, Indonesia, Finland, United Kingdom, India, Brazil, Philippines, Algeria, Poland, Netherlands and South Africa will be reviewed.

Navi Pillay hails completion of the 1st UPR cycle

The High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay congratulated on 13 October the Human Rights Council for completing a peer review of the human rights record of all 193 member states of the United Nations, and said she looked forward to concrete results in terms of human rights promotion and protection on the ground.

"The UPR has proved to be an innovative, transparent, collaborative instrument for change and has made it possible – for the first time ever – for all UN member states to be reviewed on an equal basis," said Pillay.

"It has been truly universal, with Government officials representing every single one of the 193 member states, and very active participation by local, regional and international

NGOs as well. Some 80 percent of Government delegations were led by ministers who travelled to Geneva for the review, which clearly demonstrates the importance States attached to the UPR process," she added. ([full statement](#))

DEADLINES FOR THE CIVIL SOCIETY, 14th UPR SESSION:

19 March 2012: Czech Republic, Argentina, Gabon, Ghana, Peru, Guatemala and Benin.

26 March 2012: Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Pakistan, Zambia, Japan, Ukraine and Sri Lanka.

**At the time of the publication of the newsletter the outcomes of the 11th session were not yet available to analyse.*

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND MINORITIES SECTION (IPMS)

Location/contacts:

OHCHR - IPMS
48 Avenue Giuseppe Motta
1202 Geneva, Switzerland

Tel: + 41 (0) 22 928 91 64
Fax: + 41 (0) 22 928 90 66
Web: www.ohchr.org

Mailing Address:

OHCHR - IPMS
Palais des Nations
Avenue de la Paix, 8-14
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Relevant OHCHR e-mail Addresses:

Indigenous Fellowship:
fellowship@ohchr.org

Minorities Fellowship:
minorityfellowships@ohchr.org

**Voluntary Fund for Indigenous
Populations:**
IndigenousFunds@ohchr.org

**Voluntary Fund on Contempo-
rary Forms of Slavery:**
SlaveryFund@ohchr.org

**Expert Mechanism on the
Rights of Indigenous Peoples:**
expertmechanism@ohchr.org

**Special Rapporteur (Indigenous
Peoples):**
indigenous@ohchr.org

**Independent Expert
(Minorities):**
minorityissues@ohchr.org

Forum on Minority Issues:
minorityforum@ohchr.org

16-20 January: 1st session of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, Geneva ([link](#))

16 January-3 February: 59th session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Geneva ([link](#))

6-10 February: 25th session of the Board of Trustees of the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, Geneva ([link](#))

13 February-2 March: 51st session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Geneva ([link](#))

13 February-9 March: 80th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Geneva ([link](#))

27 February-2 March: 3rd session of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, Geneva ([link](#))

12-30 March: 104th session of the Human Rights Committee, New York ([link](#))

26-30 March: 2nd session of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, Geneva ([link](#))

16-20 April: 7th session of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Geneva ([link](#))

16-27 April: 16th session of the Committee on Migrant Workers, Geneva ([link](#))

30 April-18 May: 48th session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Geneva ([link](#))

7-18 May: 11th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, New York ([link](#))

7 May-1 June: 48th session of the Committee against Torture, Geneva ([link](#))

9-13 July: 5th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Geneva ([link](#))

*IPMS wishes you a happy holiday
season and a very successful 2012!*

