Seventeenth Session of the Forum on Minority issues

28-29 November 2024

INFORMATION NOTE

(updated on 20/11/2024)

Where, when and how will the Forum be held?

- The annual Forum on Minority Issues will be held on 28 and 29 November 2024 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva (Room XX).

Who can participate in the Forum?

- The Forum is open to Member 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 nongovernmental organizations.

What is the theme and structure of the Forum?

- This year the Forum's theme is "the representation and self-representation of minorities in public spaces and discourses". Read the concept note for more details about the theme.

- The panelists will introduce the discussion through an intervention, which shall not exceed 7 minutes.

- The Forum will be structured around four thematic panel discussions:

  Item 1. Minority Representation in Public Space: highlighting the (lack of) representation of minorities in the names of streets, public places and institutions as well as architectural and ornamental installations; analyzing minorities presence, both effective and symbolic, in public policies and measures related to political symbols such as national and regional calendars (through for instance official celebrations and public holidays); discussing the role and place of minorities in memorial policies and practices; addressing the right or prohibition of minorities to show religious or cultural symbols in public spaces; assessing the (lack of) opportunities of minorities to participate in those decisions.

  Item 2. Minority Representation in Education: assessing how minority students effectively exercise their right to learn about their own history and culture; addressing the role of education to ensure that all students shall learn about the existence, specificities and contribution of minority groups to society as a whole; discussing the presence or absence of a curriculum emphasizing cultural diversity and the contribution of minority figures with an express focus on discourses on minorities history; assessing the involvement of minorities in the development of the parts of the curriculum that directly affect them.

  Item 3. Minority Representation in the Media, Including Social Media: identifying elements of languages regarding minorities in traditional and social media; apprehending the specific challenges and opportunities linked to the representation and self-representation of minorities through social media; addressing scapegoating, polarizing speech, hate speech as well as highlighting good practices of inclusive discourses on minority in the media; exploring instances of pluri-linguistic media or minority language medias; observing media contents and the broadcasting of minority cultures and traditions.

  Item 4. Minority Representation in Art and Culture: addressing the representation/misrepresentation of minorities in art and culture, as well as the biases and prejudices that may be conveyed; evaluating the possibility for minorities to engage in their own cultural and traditional activities; assessing the opportunities for minorities to represent themselves in art and culture.

- After each panel, the floor will be open for oral interventions. Based on the number of participants seeking the floor the Chairperson will announce the duration of oral interventions at the beginning of each session. However, participants should be ready to limit their interventions to 2 minutes.

How to register?

- All participants are required to register for the Forum using an online registration system Indico via the following link: https://indico.un.org/event/1014647/

- Registrations will close 20 November 2024 at 11:59 PM (Geneva time). No application will be accepted after this date.

- Participants will need to create a profile and complete the online registration before receiving confirmation of their registration by the Forum Secretariat. 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.

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

How to engage with the Forum?

- Accredited participants can engage with the Forum by making oral interventions. Please see the below section on the List of Speakers for more details about the process. Interpretation will be provided in the six official UN languages and all interventions will have to adhere to the topic under discussion and contain concrete recommendations.

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

- The event can be followed via livestream at the UN Web TV. Link to the livestream will be provided at the webpage of the Forum a few days before the event.

How will the List of Speakers be collated?

- While registering for the Forum on Indico, participants will be asked to indicate the session where they would like to intervene. While all participants are free to attend as many sessions as they wish, only one representative per organization may make an in-person statement per session.

- The list of speakers will be finalised based on the number of those requesting the floor for each session. The Chairperson will seek to ensure regional, gender and institutional balance of interventions from the floor.

- Registered participants will be able to take the floor once per agenda item. Interventions will be limited to one per organization. Please note that if you are included in the List of Speakers, you will be announced under the "organization name" indicated by you on Indico.

- Limited number of pre-recorded interventions by minority delegates will be accommodated bearing in mind time limitations. Participants from minority groups who wish to intervene via a pre-recorded video statement must register as soon as possible on Indico no later than 10 November. The Secretariat will provide further technical instructions on submitting the pre-recorded statement to delegates shortlisted to the List of Speakers.

UPDATE AS OF 20 NOVEMBER 2024:

- All participants wishing to take the floor during the different items of the Forum (in person or by video) must register on the List of Speakers via the online registration link available on EVENTS at https://events.ohchr.org. Online registration for the List of Speakers will be opened until 26 November (23:59 Geneva time). Participants who do not yet have an EVENTS account must create one to register on the List of Speakers.

- If speaking slots are still available, in-person registration will be open for ten minutes before the beginning of each session, on a first come-first served basis. In-person registration will take place at the registration desk in Room XX and will close at the beginning of each session.

- To facilitate the work of the interpreters and the accurate capture of the statements, all speakers are encouraged to upload the transcript of their statements before the beginning of the Forum. Priority in the List of Speakers will be given to participants who have registered and uploaded their statement before the registration deadline on 26 November.

- Oral interventions will be limited to 2 minutes for all participants.

How to prepare for the Forum?

- Participants are encouraged to read the materials available on the webpage of the event.

- All participants are encouraged to reflect upon key issues and recommendations in connection with the topics for each of the thematic sessions of the Forum.

- When preparing for an oral intervention, accredited participants are encouraged to ensure that they can deliver the intervention by speaking at a moderate pace; no more than 100 – 120 words per minute.

- Accredited participants must send their statements to the Secretariat at least one day in advance. Details on how to submit a statement will be provided at a later stage.

- Participants are also encouraged to attend the Preparatory Meeting on Wednesday 27 November from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM in Palais des Nations Room XXI.

Preparatory Meeting

- The Preparatory Meeting will be held on Wednesday 27 November from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM in Palais des Nations Room XXI.

- The meeting is open to all participants of the Forum and will provide guidance for participants to ensure a constructive and successful discussion during the Forum.

- 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.

Side events

- Participants may organize side events to further contribute to discussions relating to the theme of the UN Forum on Minority Issues, particularly with a view to sharing information on strategies, challenges, activities and best practices in the area.

- 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.

- Please note that only a limited number of rooms will be available to be allocated for side events. Space and timeslots will be allocated on a "first come, first served" basis.

- Requests for the side event, including the title of the side event, the concept note, and the list of tentative speakers shall be sent before 8 November 2024. No requests for side events will be accepted after this date.

- Please be aware that speakers for the side events must register in advance as participants of the Forum. While the Secretariat will provide sound operations in the rooms, any required interpretation should be arranged solely by the organizers of the side events.

What is the outcome of the Forum?

- The recommendations will be compiled in a report that will be presented by the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues to the Human Rights Council in March 2025.

- 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.

What accessibility measures are in place?

- Interpretation in International Sign Language will be provided during the Forum.
- Captioning in English, Spanish and French will be provided during the Forum.
- People with disabilities registering for the Forum are encouraged to fill in the "Accessibility requirements" segment of the registration. The Secretariat will try to accommodate the requests to the extent possible.

Where to address any additional questions?

- 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 hrc-sr-minorityforum@un.org.