



Programme of Work

16th session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues

“Minorities and Cohesive Societies: Equality, Social Inclusion, and Socio-economic Participation”

(30 November – 1 December, 2023 - Geneva, Room XX)

THURSDAY, 30 NOVEMBER

10:00 AM – 10:30 AM (local time in Geneva)

Opening Meeting

1. Statement by the President of the Human Rights Council, H.E. Václav Bálek
2. Statement by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris (*pre-recorded video*)
3. Statement by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr Kairat Abdrakhmanov (*pre-recorded video*)
4. Statement by the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Mr. Nicolas Levrat
5. Statements by the Co-Chairs of the Forum, Ms. Elena Lazar and Ms Petra Roter

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM (local time in Geneva)

Item 1: Challenges to inclusion and equality: barriers to the social and economic participation of persons belonging to minority groups

Under this item, the Forum will address the systemic and structural challenges and discrimination that minority groups may face, including the unique obstacles for women and girls belonging to minority groups, look at factors placing them at a disadvantage, such as language or other

requirements or lack of educational opportunities or resources in regions where minority groups are concentrated, and explore policies and practices that result in or exacerbate minority exclusion or place them at a disadvantage.

1. Mr. Farkhat Ibragimov – OHCHR Minority Fellowship Alumnus, Member of the Public Uyghur Association ITTIPAK of the Kyrgyz Republic
2. Mr. Mehmet Polatel - Coordinator, Minority Rights Academia, Hrant Dink Foundation
3. Ms. Laxme Das - Advocacy Officer, International Dalit Solidarity Network

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM (local time in Geneva)

Interactive dialogue

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (local time in Geneva)

Lunch break and side-events

3:00 PM – 3:30 PM (local time in Geneva)

Item 2: Socio-economic Empowerment

Under this item, the Forum will look at ways to amplify the economic participation of persons belonging to minority groups and emphasize equal opportunities in society, employment and entrepreneurship, with special attention given to the economic support of migrants and refugees belonging to minority groups. It will also aim to identify strategies to engage and empower minority young people by tapping into educational and employment prospects. In addition, participants will be encouraged to share examples of inclusive policies, including in the use of minority languages, in terms of promoting access to services and increased employment opportunities.

1. Ms Claire Thomas - Co-Executive Director, Minority Rights Group
2. Dr. Melakou Tegegn – Director, Fanos Ethiopia
3. Ms. Jennifer Jackson-Preece - Associate Professor, London School of Economics

3:30 PM – 6:00 PM (local time in Geneva)

Interactive dialogue

FRIDAY, 1 DECEMBER

10:00 AM – 10:30 AM (local time in Geneva)

Item 3: Legal and Structural Approaches to More Inclusive Societies

Under this item, the Forum will explore legislation, policies and the provision of public goods and services that respect the rights of persons belonging to minority groups to equality without discrimination. It will address access to health care and educational and economic inequalities, including through proportionate investment in infrastructure or development, examine how legislation can increase opportunities that honour and represent minority identities and discuss the importance of ensuring equal access without discrimination to technology and fostering digital literacy within minority communities.

1. Dr. Corinne Lennox, Senior Lecturer in Human Rights, School of Advanced Study, University of London
2. Mr. Farooq Aftab - Legal Adviser, Human Rights Committee
3. Mr. Slava (Veaceslav) Balan, PhD Candidate and Part-time Professor at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law

10:30 AM – 1:00 PM (local time in Geneva)

Interactive dialogue

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM (local time in Geneva)

Lunch break and side-events

3:00 PM – 3:30 PM (local time in Geneva)

Item 4: Protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minority groups towards cohesive societies

The Forum will consider positive examples, good practices and approaches, as well as challenges, relating to the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minority groups, with a view to realizing more cohesive societies.

a) **Positive examples, good practices and approaches**

The Forum will discuss legal and institutional frameworks and policies that effectively safeguard minority rights and promote the inclusion of persons belonging to minority groups in society.

b) **Challenges relating to the inclusion of persons belonging to minority groups**

Given that the scope of discussions of the Forum cannot possibly be exhaustive, under this subitem, the Forum welcomes participants to share additional information on issues of importance, and challenges faced, with regard to the inclusion of persons belonging to minority groups in cohesive societies.

1. Ms. Nouha Grine - Secretary of Tamount Association for Amazigh Rights
2. Ms. Lecia Brooks, Southern Poverty Law Center, Senior Advisor to the President
3. Mr. Hani Anouti, Affiliated Professor in Middle Eastern Politics at Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals

3:30 PM – 5:45 PM (local time in Geneva)

Interactive dialogue

5:45 PM – 6 PM (local time in Geneva)

Concluding remarks

Concluding remarks by **Mr. Nicolas Levrat**, Special Rapporteur on minority issues

Concluding remarks by **Ms. Elena Lazar and Ms. Petra Roter**, Co-Chairpersons of the Forum on Minority Issues