



# General Assembly

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**Human Rights Council**  
**Forum on Minority Issues**  
Fourth session  
Geneva, 29–30 November 2011

## **Provisional agenda and annotations thereto**

### **Note by the Secretariat**

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
2. International and regional human rights frameworks and recent global initiatives relating to minority women's rights
3. Minority women and girls and the right to education
4. Minority women and effective political participation
5. Minority women and effective participation in economic, social and cultural life
6. National practices and experiences: positive measures/affirmative action and role models
7. Concrete steps aimed at guaranteeing the rights of minority women
8. Concluding remarks

## **1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

### **Venue**

1. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 6/15, the fourth session of the Forum on Minority Issues will be held in Geneva on 29 and 30 November 2011.
2. The Forum will have before it the provisional agenda contained in the present document to consider for adoption. A tentative schedule of work for the session is contained in annex I.

### **Opening meeting**

3. At the current session, it is again envisaged that the President of the Human Rights Council will deliver an opening statement. Statements will then be made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Chairperson of the Forum on Minority Issues and the independent expert on minority issues.

### **Documentation**

4. A list of documents for the session is provided in annex II. In addition to normal distribution, official documents for the session will be made available on the Human Rights Council website at the address:  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/minority/forum.htm>.

## **2. International and regional human rights frameworks and recent global initiatives relating to minority women's rights**

5. At the current session of the Forum, participants will once again have an opportunity to make brief presentations and comments based on the draft recommendations that they will have before them. After the presentations given at the beginning of each agenda item, there will be an open discussion to which all participants will be invited to contribute, based on a sign-up sheet.
6. Participants in the session will be provided with a brief overview of existing international and regional standards and principles relating to the rights of minority women, including the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. With a view to set the framework for ensuing discussions, presentations will also address recent global initiatives relating to the rights of minority women.

## **3. Minority women and girls and the right to education**

7. Under this agenda item, the discussion will include an overview of international and regional human rights frameworks and core principles on the right of minority women and girls to education. The discussions will also identify the essential requirements for an effective education strategy for minority women and girls; measures aimed at guaranteeing equal access to quality education and training for minority women and girls while

addressing barriers such as language, security issues, absence of private bathrooms and decent sanitation facilities for girls, and internal factors, including local customs and cultural practices; the learning environment and school governance; and the content and delivery of curricula that may not reflect the community priorities and the specific situation of minority girls.

#### **4. Minority women and effective political participation**

8. Under this agenda item, discussion will include an overview of international and regional human rights frameworks and core principles on the right of minority women to effective political participation. The discussions will identify remaining obstacles and conditions required to guarantee the effective political participation of minority women. The agenda item will also look at concrete steps and existing measures aimed at increasing the political participation of minority women and at building their capacity to participate effectively and to reach meaningful and equal representation in decision-making. These would include special measures such as quotas, reserved seats or other such mechanisms to increase the participation of minority women in all forms and levels of governments, including in local authorities and minority traditional forms of governance, as well as in consultative bodies.

#### **5. Minority women and effective participation in economic, social and cultural life**

9. Under this agenda item, discussion will include an overview of the legal framework and core principles with regard to the right of minority women to effectively participate in economic, social and cultural life, as well as recent global initiatives. The discussion will identify existing challenges faced by minority women in the realization of their economic, social and cultural rights. Topics for discussion will include good practices to ensure the right of minority women to work, guarantee their access to labour markets, increased participation of minority women in sustainable livelihood activities generally undertaken by men, and the integration of minority women in economic development as well as in policymaking and decision-making processes. Participants will also discuss the access of minority women to social security, culturally and gender-sensitive health care and childcare facilities and issues relating to housing, land and property rights and inheritance by minority women.

#### **6. National practices and experiences: positive measures/affirmative action and role models**

10. This agenda item will focus on national laws, policies and practices that have been developed to foster the rights of minority women and their impact on the full enjoyment of the rights of minority women and their empowerment. Governments will be invited to describe their political, economic, social and cultural policies designed to support and promote equal rights and opportunities for minority women. Equally, minority women will discuss the role that they can and should play in policymaking and decision-making in the public and private spheres and share their positive grass-roots experiences as individuals and members of minority women's organizations. The discussion will also take into consideration measures to enhance the mainstreaming of women's rights in minority groups' discourses and how women's organizations are integrating the rights of minorities in their overall work and activities. Positive measures as well as experiences from minority

women role models who have achieved success in the arts, science, culture and sports will also be presented.

## **7. Concrete steps aimed at guaranteeing the rights of minority women**

11. Under this agenda item, discussion will focus on improving the draft recommendations that participants have before them. The objective will be to formulate practical policies, actions or programmes that would ensure the full enjoyment of the rights of minority women and generate a greater degree of participation in private and public life at the national, regional and local levels. One first step could be to collect and disseminate data disaggregated by ethnicity and sex, particularly on access of minority women to education, political participation, economic opportunities, social security, health care and access to legal remedies.

## **8. Concluding remarks**

12. The Chairperson of the Forum and the independent expert on minority issues will share their concluding remarks, including forward-looking proposals for next steps, with Forum participants.

## Annex I

### Schedule of work

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*Tuesday, 28 November 2011*

*10 a.m. – 1 p.m.*

*3 p.m. – 6 p.m.*

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Opening of the Forum on Minority Issues

- Welcome and opening remarks by the President of the Human Rights Council
- Remarks by the independent expert on minority issues
- Remarks by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Remarks by the Chairperson of the Forum on Minority Issues

Minority women and girls and the right to education (*continued*)

Minority women and effective political participation

International and regional human rights frameworks and recent global initiatives relating to the rights of minority women

Minority women and girls and the right to education

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*Wednesday, 30 November 2011*

*10 a.m. – 1 p.m.*

*3 p.m. – 6 p.m.*

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Minority women and effective participation in economic, social and cultural life

National practices and experiences: positive measures/affirmative action and role models

National practices and experiences: positive measures/affirmative action and role models (*continued*)

Concrete steps aimed at guaranteeing the rights of minority women

Concluding remarks

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## Annex II

### Documents before the Forum on Minority Issues at its fourth session

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
A/HRC/FMI/2011/1	Provisional agenda and annotations thereto; note by the Secretariat
A/HRC/FMI/2011/2	Note by the independent expert on minority issues, Rita Izsák, on guaranteeing the rights of minority women
A/HRC/FMI/2011/3	Draft recommendations on guaranteeing the rights of minority women

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