



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2003/1/Add.1  
25 March 2003

Original: ENGLISH

---

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Sub-Commission on the Promotion and  
Protection of Human Rights  
Fifty-fifth session  
Working Group on Minorities  
Ninth session, 12-16 May 2003

**ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

**Note by the Secretary-General**

**Introduction**

1. The establishment of the Working Group on Minorities was recommended by the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in its resolution 1994/4 of 19 August 1994 and authorized by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1995/24 of 3 March 1995, in which it called upon the Sub-Commission to examine, as a matter of priority, ways and means to promote and protect effectively the rights of persons belonging to minorities as set out in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities of 18 December 1992. For that purpose it authorized the Sub-Commission to establish an intersessional working group. This resolution was subsequently endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1995/31 of 25 July 1995. By decision 1998/246 of 30 July 1998, the Economic and Social Council extended the mandate of the Working Group with a view to its holding one session of five working days annually.

2. The ninth session of the Working Group is scheduled to be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 12 to 16 May 2003.

## **Item 1 Adoption of the agenda**

3. The provisional agenda for the ninth session of the Working Group contained in document E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2003/1 includes items on the promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minorities as set out in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1995/24, requested the Working Group to give priority consideration to the three main items contained in paragraph 9 of that resolution, namely:

(a) To review the promotion and practical realization of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities;

(b) To examine possible solutions to problems involving minorities, including the promotion of mutual understanding between and among minorities and Governments;

(c) To recommend further measures, as appropriate, for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

4. In accordance with the above-mentioned paragraph, the Working Group decided to consider the issues in the following order at its present session: reviewing the promotion and practical realization of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities; examining possible solutions to problems involving minorities, including the promotion of mutual understanding between and among minorities and Governments; recommending further measures, as appropriate, for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities; the future role of the Working Group; and other matters.

## **Item 2 Organization of work**

5. It is proposed that the number of meetings for each agenda item would be as follows: two to three meetings for agenda item 3 (a); two to three meetings for agenda item 3 (b); and two to three meetings for agenda item 3 (c).

### **Item 3 (a) Reviewing the promotion and practical realization of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities**

6. Under this agenda item, observers representing minorities, Governments and others are invited to present information on measures which have an impact on minority rights, including obstacles and negative developments as well as positive measures taken.

**Item 3 (b) Examining possible solutions to problems involving minorities, including the promotion of mutual understanding between and among minorities and Governments**

7. The Working Group will continue its examination of autonomist and integrative approaches to minority protection with a view to listing a range of options in this regard. Mr. Tom Hadden will present a working paper for discussion (E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2003/WP.1), as was suggested at the seventh session of the Working Group on Minorities (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/22, paragraph 158).

8. The Working Group will also continue its examination of ways to mainstream minority rights in development.

9. Conference room papers relating to this agenda item will be made available.

**Item 3 (c) Recommending further measures, as appropriate, for the promotion and protection of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities**

**Development of regional networks and promoting regional cooperation**

10. In paragraph 73 of the report of the Working Group on its eighth session (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2002/19), the Working Group recommended, inter alia, that seminars be held in different regions. Accordingly, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights organized the first Asia-Pacific regional seminar on Minority Rights: Cultural Diversity and Development in South Asia, in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 4 to 7 December 2002. The report of that seminar is available as document E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2003/2.

**The issue of the possible drafting of a code of conduct on the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities**

11. In accordance with paragraph 73 of the report of the Working Group on its eighth session (ibid.), a main theme selected for discussion at the Working Group's ninth session is "The drafting of a code of conduct on the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities". The Working Group will hold its first discussion on the usefulness or otherwise of preparing such a code of conduct or set of guidelines, taking into account regional and national differences. The working paper by Mr. Hadden will be drawn upon also under this item of the agenda.

**Further measures**

12. The Working Group will continue to discuss further measures for the protection of persons belonging to minorities. Observers are invited to make proposals or present existing measures which could act as examples or be replicated.

**Item 4 The future role of the Working Group**

13. Mr. Asbjørn Eide will present the first part of the update to his earlier reports submitted to the Sub-Commission on peaceful and constructive approaches to situations involving minorities (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/34, Add.1-4).

14. The Working Group recommended that it should, in accordance with its mandate, continue to act as a forum for dialogue and exchange of ideas, information and experiences with a view to the elaboration of proposals for constructive group accommodation and further measures to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to minorities. A paper on the possibilities of establishing a special procedure mechanism is to be made available.

**Item 5 Other matters**

15. Under this item, members of the Working Group may consider a range of issues relating to its mandate and its activities.

-----