Non-Governmental Organizations Committee Recommends Special Consultative Status for 26 Entities, Defers Action on 57 Others

January 27, 2016

UN Press Release

http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/ecosoc6729.doc.htm

Continuing its regular session for 2016, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations today recommended 26 organizations for special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and deferred action on the status of 57 others.

The 19-member Committee considers applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification submitted by non-governmental organizations.  Once an application has been reviewed and approved by the Committee it is considered recommended for consultative status.  Organizations which were granted general and special status can attend meetings of the Council and issue statements, while those with general status can also speak during meetings and propose agenda items.  Organizations with roster status can only attend meetings.

Action on several applications were postponed because Committee members requested further information from the candidates about, among other items, details of their respective organizations’ activities, partners, expenditures, sources of funding and relationship with United Nations system actors.

The Committee also elected Forouzandeh Vadiati of Iran as Vice-Chair.

The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations will meet again at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 28 January, to continue its session.

Special Consultative Status

The Committee recommended that the Economic and Social Council grant special consultative status to the following 26 organizations:

Sudanese Organization for Combating Violence against Women & Child (SAO) (Sudan), following a discussion about the group’s website.

The representative of Iran noted that the website was not working.  The representative of the United States said members typically examined applicants’ websites, but other than questions posed in the application, it was not a requirement to have a website.  Iran’s representative said applications alone would suffice for some delegations, however, finding information online was important to others.  She said her first invention was meant as a note, not a question about the group.

A member of the Secretariat said the website was indeed accessible online.

Iran’s representative said her delegation was not trying to stop the process for the group, as it was doing meaningful work.

South Africa’s representative said he agreed with the United States delegate, adding that if a group did not have a website, it should not list one.  It was up to the Committee to point out that applicants’ websites were functional.

Partnership for Human Rights (Georgia);

Al-Ayn Social Care Foundation (Iraq);

Ethnic Community Development Organization (ECDO) (Bangladesh);

Global Mass Community (Welfare Organization) (Pakistan);

India Media Centre (India);

India Water Foundation (India);

Insan Dost Association (Pakistan);

Instituto Igarapé (Brazil);

Kaushalya Gramodyog Sansthan (India);

NGOs Computer Literacy Shelter Welfare, Rawalpindi Cantt. (Pakistan);

Palestine Sports for Life (State of Palestine);

Shah Maqeem Trust (Pakistan);

Shah Satnam Ji Green-S Welfare Force Wing (India);

Sri Sri J.S.M.D. Sri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri (India);

Takal Welfare Organization (Pakistan);

West Africa Centre for Peace Foundation (Ghana);

Yayasan Dompet Dhuafa Republika (Indonesia);

Action on Smoking and Health (United States);

African Australian Network Limited (Australia);

Australian Drug Foundation Inc. (Australia);

Engineers Without Borders - International (United States);

Forum Europeen pour les Roms et les Gens du Voyage (FERV) (France);

Fundación Novia Salcedo (Spain);

Association for the Protection of Women and Children’s Rights (Cameroon);

Human Rights Observers (India);

The Committee postponed consideration of the following 57 organizations:

Prajachaitanya Yuvajana Sangam (India) — as the representative of India asked about the repayment of the group’s loan and for details on one of its education projects.

Prime Initiative for Green Development (Nigeria) — as the representative of South Africa asked about the group’s small budget, its website was inactive and about details on the mandate, which was not clear.  The representative of the United States said he understood the mandate clearly and mentioned that the group perhaps did not speak English as a first language.  The representative of Greece said the grammar and English in the application might not be perfect, but that was not a reason to penalize a non-governmental organization.  South Africa’s representative said the last intervention was worrisome as non-governmental organizations should be able to express themselves clearly.

Red, Paz, Integración y Desarrollo “PAZINDE” (Bolivia) — as the representative of Venezuela asked for details on the scope of group’s involvement in conferences mentioned in the application.

Anti-Corruption Foundation (Russian Federation) — as the representative of Venezuela asked a question about the group’s deficit.  Cuba’s representative asked for examples of projects and activities and how the group intended to contribute to the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies.

Association pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des revendications démocratiques/culturelles du peuple Azerbaidjanais-Iran — “ARC” (France) — as the representative of Iran asked about the scope of the group’s activities and budget.  She also asked about how the organization was going to cover many groups in the Middle East region.

Bancroft Global Development (United States) — as the representative of Cuba asked for details on the origin of funds and which Governments were supporting the group.

Christian Solidarity International (CSI) (Switzerland) — as the representative of Sudan asked for clarifications of incorrect information on his country and for details on its funding.  He also asked if there was an institutional relationship with the organization Christian Solidarity Worldwide.  South Africa’s representative asked for clarification on the projects outlined in the application, particularly in South Sudan, and which partners were involved.  The representative of the United States asked for clarification of questions posed by the delegate from Sudan.  The representative of Sudan said he sought clarification about incorrect information about Sudan and the source of that information.  The representative of the United States asked for clarification of questions posed on the group’s finances.  The representative of Sudan asked about funding.  He also said the incorrect information he referred to concerned statistics.

Cuba’s representative asked for clarification about when the organization would be considered, to which Chair Jorge Dotta (Uruguay) said the Committee would wait to receive the correct information from Sudan’s delegation.

Fondazione Proclade Internazionale - Onlus (Italy) — as the representative of South Africa asked for clarification on how the organization would deal with budget deficits.  India’s representative asked for details on projects other than those in the north-east of his country.  In addition, he asked for the group’s use of the term “indigenous people” when India in fact did not refer to its citizens as such.

The Chair asked India’s representative if there was a political reason for his question on indigenous peoples.  India’s representative said he did not want to discuss politics and he sought clarification from the organization on that issue.  The representative of South Africa said he fully supported India’s position on the question of definitions of indigenous peoples on a national level.

Global Financial Integrity (United States) — as the representative of South Africa asked for details on the group’s budget.  China’s representative said the group’s website did not use the correct name for Taiwan and would like a clarification on the organization’s position.

Global Network of Sex Work Projects Limited (United Kingdom) — as the representative of South Africa asked for details on funding from Governments.  India’s representative said the Network had 230 member organizations worldwide and he wanted to know the names and country affiliations of those organizations.

Inimõiguste Instituut (Estonia) — as the representative of China said the group’s income was $40,000 and wondered how the group could operate.  The representative of the Russian Federation asked about whether the group addressed issues of national minorities in Estonia.

Institute for Security and Safety GmbH (Germany) — as the representative of South Africa asked for clarification on how the group would contribute to the work of the Council and who they trained and educated.  She also asked for aggregated data for funding in 2013 and for information on current projects.  Iran’s representative asked about details on the scope of the work of the organization that referred to nuclear and cybersecurity.

International Detention Coalition Inc. (Australia) — as the representative of South Africa asked for more disaggregated information on financing projects.

Los Angeles Community Action Network (United States) — as the representative of Cuba asked how the organization expected to carry out work with a budget deficit.

Martial Arts Academy (France) — as the representative of South Africa said that questions had been previously conveyed to the group, which had responded in December 2015 in French only.  She was, therefore, unable to follow the responses and asked the Bureau for advice.

A Secretariat member said it was not in the position of providing translation to documents submitted after the submission of the application.  As such, Committee members who spoke French could help those with such translations.

South Africa’s representative asked if that could take place now as she was concerned that the group was involved in martial arts and music.

The representative of the United States said she understood that the official United Nations languages were English and French and that the organization should not be penalized.

A Secretariat member said it was not in a position to translate the responses.

South Africa’s representative said that given the circumstances she was unable to make a decision on the organization.  Her delegation was never penalizing the group, but merely wanted to understand the responses.

The Next Century Foundation (United Kingdom) — as the representative of South Africa asked for details on the group’s budget deficit.

The RINJ Foundation (Canada) — as the representative of South Africa asked for more details on planned activities and projects in specific countries in Africa.

International Electrotechnical Commission (Switzerland) — with the representative of India saying the criteria for considering the organization based on a global presence and the group had indicated that it was a national, technical group.  He requested that the Committee paused to discuss the issue or for clarification from the Secretariat.

A Secretariat member said it was a good suggestion for the Committee to informally consult on the issue.

The representative of India noted that the organization’s work was only standard-setting, and he was not sure if it fit into the Committee’s criteria.

The representatives of Greece and the United States noted that the organization’s aim, purpose and activities were relevant to the Council’s work.  They had no objection to granting a special consultative status to the organization.

South Africa’s delegate said that the Committee needed to carefully review the organization’s activities before granting status.

Taking the floor for a second time, India’s representative asked for clarification on the organization’s activities.

International Federation of Thanatologists Associations FIAT-IFTA (Netherlands) — as the representative of China noted that “Taiwan” was listed as a country on the organization’s website.

World Evangelical Alliance (United States) — as the representative of China asked for clarification on the organization’s activities.

Yayasan Cinta Anak Bangsa (Indonesia) — as the representative of China noted that “Taiwan” was listed as a country on the organization’s website.

Asociación Pro-Bienestar de la Familia Colombiana "Profamilia" (Colombia) — as the representative of Nicaragua asked whether the organization had engaged in any activities in Central America.

Association Concerning Sexual Violence against Women (China) — as the representative of China asked for clarification on the organization’s activities in the past two years.

Business and Professional Women Voluntary Organization – Sudan (Sudan) — as the representative of South Africa asked about the organization’s budget deficit.

Campanha Latino-Americana pelo Direito à Educação - CLADE Brasil (Brazil) — as the representative of Nicaragua asked for clarification on the organization’s activities.  South Africa’s delegate asked about the organization’s budget deficit.

ELA-Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género (Argentina) — as the representative of Nicaragua asked whether the organization had engaged in any activities in Central America.

Eminence Associates for Social Development (Bangladesh) — as the representative of South Africa asked for detailed information about the sources of funding.

Human Rights Sanrakshan Sansthaa (India) — as the representative of South Africa asked for clarification on the organization’s aims and purposes.

International Police Commission Philippine Command Association Inc. (Philippines) — as the representative of South Africa asked how the organization expected to carry out work with a budget deficit.

Liberia Youth Initiative for Peace and Sustainable Development (LYIPSUD), Inc. (Liberia) — as the representative of South Africa asked for clarification related to private grants.

Light House (Bangladesh) — as the representative of Nicaragua requested the organization to submit an updated financial report.

PCCIIS International Inc. (Bangladesh) — as the representative of India requested the organization to provide the Committee with its registration certificate.

Sindhi Adhikar Manch (Association) (India) — as the representative of South Africa asked for initiatives undertaken by the organization to deal with its budgetary deficit.

The Bahrain Young Ladies Association (Bahrain) — as the representative of Mauritania asked for detailed information about the sources of funding.  South Africa’s delegate asked for clarification on how the organization would deal with budget deficits.  Sudan’s representative asked for further information about the organization’s activities.

The Kuki Organization For Human Rights Trust (India) — as the representative of Iran asked for a detailed work plan.

Youth Foundation of Bangladesh (Bangladesh) — as the representative of India asked for detailed information about the sources of funding and expenditures.

IDEAS Centre (Switzerland) — as the representative of South Africa asked for details on the support the group gave to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) during the Doha process.

Article 36 Limited (United Kingdom) — as the representative of South Africa noted that the organization focused on the weapons industry and asked whether it was relevant, adding that, perhaps, the organization could be active with the Security Council or other relevant bodies and subsidiary bodies of the United Nations.  The representative of the United States asked in what field of Economic and Social Council did the group plan to participate.

Assyrian National Congress (United States) — as the representative of India asked the group to clarify how many countries it was active in.  South Africa’s representative said the group had said it served the “ancient” peoples and asked about contemporary peoples.

Avocats Sans Frontières (Belgium) — as the representative of South Africa said the group’s mandate had taken over the Geneva Conventions’ mandate and asked the organization how that was possible.

Azerbaijani American Cultural Association, Inc. (United States) — as the representative of South Africa asked about the budget deficit and how the organization would engage in activities in the future.  The representative of Azerbaijan said that those questions had been answered and the financial statement had been provided.

Behinderung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit e.V. (Germany) — as the representative of South Africa asked for disaggregated data for funding and details about the organization’s focus on persons with disabilities living in poverty.

Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (Bulgaria) — as the representative of South Africa asked about details on Government funding.  The United States’ representative asked if the Bulgarian delegate had any information.  The representative of the Russian Federation noted that the group had already answered a question on funding details.  South Africa’s representative said she would examine the information pointed out by her counterpart from the Russian Federation.  The representative of Bulgaria said the same question was asked in 2015 and the organization had replied.  The group was not funded by the Government, but it had applied for project financing.  It was an important organization that had promoted the human rights of women and had been instrumental for helping to draft new legislation in Bulgaria, particularly on gender equality and violence against women.  As such, she said the organization would benefit the work of the Council.  South Africa’s representative said her delegation had just examined relevant information and asked how the organization ensured its independence.  Nicaragua’s representative said she supported the organization and she regretted to say that there were additional questions for the group before it could be granted status.

Bureau international pour le respect des droits de l'homme au Sahara Occidental (Switzerland) — as the representative of Burundi said the answers provided to previous questions had been confusing as to the address of the group, as the one provided was very different from the documentation in the application.  He also asked for more information on its activities in 2015.

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (United Kingdom) — as the representative of South Africa asked how the organization would deal with their $4 million deficit.  The representative of Greece said that question had already been asked in May 2015.  South Africa’s representative said the answers that had been provided were unsatisfactory.  The representative of the United States cited the answers that had been provided and noted that detailed questions on the application, particularly a balance sheet.  The response had included that data, including that the group had a “huge” surplus, more than $33 million, more than enough to cover their deficit for the year in question.  As such, the group seemed well positioned to go forward with their activities and asked South Africa’s representative if that would suffice.  South Africa’s representative asked the group for the most up to date financial information to ascertain the most current information.

Collectif des Familles de Disparu(e)s en Algerie (France) — as the representative of Venezuela asked for details on the group’s work.

Days for Girls International (United States) — as the representative of South Africa asked for details on projects, including in the field of health.

Digital Opportunity Trust (Canada) — as the representative of South Africa asked for the latest financial statements and how the group would handle the deficit.

ELIGE Red de Jóvenes por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos, A.C. (Mexico) — as Nicaragua’s representative asked if the group was a subsidiary of ELIGE and how it was financed.  South Africa’s representative asked for details on the budget deficit.

Engineers Without Borders - USA, Inc. (United States) — as the representative of China said the website incorrectly identified Taiwan as a country and he hoped the group would clarify its position on Taiwan and correct that information according to United Nations rules.

European Muslims League (Switzerland) — as the representative of Israel said there were media reports on the secretary-general of the organization having ties with Al-Qaida and with allegations of stoning women.  China’s representative said the chair of the organization had said the group had taken part in a meeting as a human rights organization, and then asked for details on that meeting and how the organization had participated.

Foundation for Sustainable Development (United States) — as the representative of South Africa requested further information on projects in Africa and partner organizations.  Cuba’s representative also asked for details on the organization’s partners.

Fountain House, Inc. (United States) — as the representative of South Africa asked for the latest financial statements and details on the budget deficit.

Gain International (United States) — as the representative of Iran said her delegation had asked for clarification on the term “Persian Gulf” and had been satisfied with the response.  However, she hoped that in future reports, the organization would use the correct name that had been approved by the United Nations.  South Africa’s representative asked for more information about the gifts in kind that the organization had referred to in its application.

Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (United Kingdom) — as the representative of South Africa said the group had classified itself as international, with work in Africa, and asked for details on projects.

Interactive Discussion

During a question-and-answer session this afternoon, a representative of the organization Association for the Protection of Women and Children’s Rights took the floor, briefly describing his group.  The Committee decided to grant special consultative status to the organization without putting any questions to it.

The representative of the organization Human Rights Observers responded to questions that were posed to him yesterday, noting that the organization was not a company, but a non-profit organization.  The organization received funding in India and not internationally, he said.  On a question dealing with indigenous peoples, he said the group protected and defended the rights of those peoples.  The representative of India then asked for the sources of the national funding that the organization’s representative had mentioned, asking specifically about the Government funding.  The organization’s representative said it did not receive Government funding but instead got funding from three different foundations.  India’s delegate then asked about the organization’s international offices, to which the organization’s representative responded that his group interacted with those offices, but that they had been set up as separate entities.  The representative of India said the term “indigenous peoples” was not applicable to India’s tribal people.  The organization was then granted special consultative status.

Taking the floor next was the representative of the organization World Without Genocide.  The representative of China, noting that the organization had taken part in the past work of the Commission on the Status of Women, asked her about the group’s mandate and its relevance to the Commission.  The representative responded that the group had worked “tirelessly” for the rights of women.  The representative of the Russian Federation asked why the group had not initially listed its website when it had submitted its application.  In response, the group’s representative said she assumed that was an oversight.

The representative of Turkey, noting that the organization’s income was generated by “contracts”, asked for more information about those agreements and about the nature and scope of activities associated with them.  The representative of Iran stressed that the term “genocide” carried deep impacts, and asked how the group dealt with that connotation.  To that, the group’s representative responded that while the title was “World Without Genocide”, the organization focused on teaching the world about genocides that had happened in the past and dealing with denials of human rights.  On its budget, she said the organization did not receive “contracts” per se, and did not receive Government funding.  The representative of South Africa asked about the group’s flagship programmes.  The organization’s representative responded that its work was mostly with local legislatures in adopting international laws to bring about the end of genocide.  The Committee then postponed its consideration of the organization.

Turning to the next organization on the list, Peace Islands Institute, the representative of Azerbaijan asked whether the organization’s work was regional or international in scope, and whether it could provide a list of activities carried out internationally in written form.  The representative of China asked about the group’s position on Tibet, as it might have connections with the independence movement of Tibet.  The representative of the Russian Federation asked whether the group planned to take part in the work of the Council.  South Africa’s representative asked for some of the “highlights” of the group’s work.  The representative of Cuba then asked for more information on the organization’s budget, while the representative of Iran asked for the group to elaborate on its work in Syria.

Responding, the representative of the organization said that his group sought to bring people together, and in that sense it was international.  Some of that work included girls’ education in Afghanistan and work with orphans in Haiti.  To the representative of China, he said his group had no relations with any organization from Tibet.  To the delegate from the Russian Federation, he said the organization had worked on the Sustainable Development Agenda alongside other groups, trying to bring that Agenda to non-governmental organizations in Africa.  Highlights of the group’s work included the conference held during the General Assembly.

The Committee decided to postpone its consideration of the organization.

Prior to turning to the next organization, Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation, the representative of Cuba, also speaking on behalf of Nicaragua and Venezuela, said the application presented by the organization was not in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.  The aims of the organization went against the territorial integrity of a Member State of the United Nations.  He, therefore, asked that the application be closed.

The representative of the United States did not share the view represented by Cuba.  He noted that the Committee had often considered applications for years, while the submission under consideration had only come up last May.  It was “terribly premature” to close the application of that organization.  The representative of Cuba said there was no consensus on the request made by his country.  He understood that there was a request for a vote on the application’s status, and said it was still premature for that vote.  He, therefore, requested that the vote be taken on Friday to allow time for delegates to receive instructions from their capitals.

Venezuela’s delegate said the case was an exceptional one.  “This is not a common application”, she stressed, noting that the applicant went against the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.  Therefore, prolonging the discussion would go against the relevant resolutions guiding the Committee’s work.

Meanwhile, the representative of the Russian Federation said he supported the position of Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, and asked the organization about its unsuccessful bid for consultative status in 2010.  He wondered if it had made any changes since then, and if so, what.

The representative of the United States said that one country, in particular, had an issue with the group under discussion.  However, the Committee should engage with the organization to better understand its views.  “We are closing the door on dialogue,” he stressed in that regard.

The representative of Cuba said the organization called for separation from the territory of Viet Nam, which ran counter to the United Nations Charter.  As there was no consensus among Committee members on how to proceed, he called for a vote.  He said that he was not making accusations, but simply reading from the group’s application.  The representative of the United States said that, ahead of Friday’s vote, he hoped the Committee could hear the views of the organization’s representative, who was here today.  South Africa’s delegate objected to that course of action, proposing that a vote be held today on whether the group could come to the podium.

The Chair then announced that a vote would be held on that proposal, with the alternative of adjourning the meeting, as it was 6 p.m.  By a vote of 14 in favour to 3 against with 1 abstention, the Committee decided to adjourn the meeting.