Continuing Session, Non-Governmental Organizations Committee Recommends Consultative Status for 6 Entities, Defers Action on 80

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UN Meetings Coverage

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Continuing its regular session for 2017, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations today recommended six organizations for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and deferred action on the status of 80 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 was 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 by acclamation Farid Jabrayilov (Azerbaijan), on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, Vice-Chair and postponed the election of its remaining Vice-Chairs.  Mr. Jabrayilov would also continue to serve as Committee Rapporteur.

The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations will meet again at 10 a.m. on Monday, 6 February, to continue its session.

Consultative Status

The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) considered deferred applications, recommending special consultative status be granted to the following organizations:

equilibres & populations (France);

HACEY’s Health Initiative (Nigeria);

Light House (Bangladesh);

People and Police for Egypt for Culture and Scientific Services (Egypt);

The Leading Association Alryada for Development Studies and Human Rights (Egypt); and

The Lady Fatemah (A.S.) Charitable Trust (United Kingdom).

The Committee postponed consideration of the following organizations:

Egyptian Centre for Human Rights (Egypt) — as the representative of India requested a breakdown of donations received and information about donor sources.

Establishment of Sheikh Thani bin Abdullah Al Thani for Humanitarian Services (Qatar) — as the representative of Iran pointed out that the organization had requested the Committee to consider its application during its resumed session in May 2017.

Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB) (Bangladesh)  — as the representative of Nicaragua requested information on new projects.

Global Campaign for Education (South Africa) — as the representative of South Africa requested details on projects in the country, why the organization was not registered there and whether it had any links to the Government.

Global Initiative for Positive Change (South Africa) — as the representative of South Africa asked for details on projects.

Gulshan-e-John (Pakistan) — as the representative of Pakistan requested details on offices worldwide and on the organization’s work in Kenya.

Heal the Land Initiative in Nigeria (Nigeria) — as the representative of South Africa asked if the organization had any engagement with the Government of Nigeria.

Heavenly Shower of Peace Church of God (Nigeria) — as the representative of South Africa requested details on the organization’s participation in an international conference that had been mentioned in its application.

Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly Vanadzor Office (Armenia) — as the representative of Azerbaijan asked for clarification on the organization’s statement that it was not a political group.  He said the group’s website contained politically motivated items with false information that tried to mislead the international community.

International Association for Religious Freedom, Co-ordinating Council for South Asia (India) — as the representative of India asked which countries the organization operated in.

International Human Right Organization (Pakistan) — as the representative of Pakistan requested a list of projects with Government partners.

International Non-Olympic Committee (India) — as the representative of India requested details on membership.

International Non-Olympic University (India) — as the representative of India requested details of research work in the last two years.

Medical Women’s Association of Nigeria (Nigeria) — as the representative of South Africa asked for clarification of the organization’s main activities and whether it worked with the Government of Nigeria.

National Development Youth Club, Jaran Wali Gali Poonch (Jammu and Kashmir) — as the representative of India requested a list and details of activities and an annual report.

Neighbourhood Community Network (India) — as the representative of India asked if the organization had other offices in India and, if so, that it provide addresses.  He also asked for details on plans for the coming two years.

Sheikh Eid Bin Mohammad Al Thani Charitable Association (Qatar) — as the representative of Iran, referring to the organization’s appointed board, asked how it complied with requirements for implementing transparent decision-making processes.

Social Services Trust (India) — as the representative of India requested for details on programmes and activities.

Society Without Violence Non-Governmental Organization (Armenia) — as the representative of Azerbaijan requested details and scope of activities, particularly a project in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Society for Environment and Development (India) — as the representative of India asked for details on funding from international sources.

Swadhikar (India) — as the representative of India asked if the organization had been registered and filed taxes in India.

The F W de Klerk Foundation Trust (South Africa) — as the representative of South Africa said the organization had indicated it organized conferences and dialogue.  She requested further information on recent such activities and for clarification on its mandate and its engagement with the Government.

The Voice Society (Pakistan) — as the representative of Pakistan asked for details on projects.

Treatment & Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture (State of Palestine) — as the representative of Israel asked for a list of international organization partnerships.

VOICE (Vietnamese Overseas Initiative for Conscience Empowerment) (Philippines) — as the representative of Cuba asked for a list of projects, their locations and local partners.

V‐Day Karama (Egypt) — as the representative of Pakistan requested details of conflict-prevention activities.

West Papua Interest Association (Indonesia) — as the representative of the Russian Federation asked if the organization was registered and had any engagement with the Government.  The representative of Iran asked for clarification on spontaneous contributions and how it operated.  The representative of China asked how it intended to implement projects with its limited budget.

Yay Gender Harmony (Indonesia) — as the representative of India asked for details on funding sources for projects.

Action Against Hunger USA (United States) — as the representative of China said corrections that had been requested had not been made on the organization’s website.

Anti-Corruption Foundation (Russian Federation) — as the representative of the Russian Federation asked for details on legislative proposals that had been mentioned in the application.

Asia Center for Human Rights (Republic of Korea) — as the representative of Iran asked for details on recent activities.

Association for Human Rights and Solidarity with Oppressed People (MAZLUMDER) (Turkey) — as the representative of China asked for details on the organization’s participation in a conference, as mentioned in the application.

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 for clarification on the area “South Azerbaijan” and on the organization’s stance on the territorial integrity of United Nations Member States.

Bahrain Center for Human Rights (Denmark) — as the representative of Sudan requested details on projects.

Bureau international pour le respect des droits de l’homme au Sahara Occidental (Switzerland) — as the representative of Azerbaijan asked for details on partner NGOs.

Center for Constitutional Rights Inc. (United States) — as the representative of China asked for more information on contributions to related United Nations processes.

Center for Democracy and Technology (United States) — as the representative of China requested current financial details.

Center for Media & Peace Initiative Inc. (United States) — as the representative of Venezuela asked for details on a publication not listed in the application.  The representative of South Africa asked for clarification on what the organization considered “undemocratic” countries.

Center of Political Analysis and Information Security (Russian Federation) — as the representative of the Russian Federation asked for a list of countries the organization operated in.

Centre Zagros pour les Droits de l’Homme (Switzerland) — as the representative of Iran asked for the organization’s stance on the territorial integrity of United Nations Member States and for financial details.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (United Kingdom) — as the representative of China asked whether the organization had been involved in the universal periodic review over the last two years and, if so, requested detailed information.  The representative of Greece said freedom of religion was a universal human right, noting that the group had responded to more than 80 of the Committee’s questions and requesting a vote on its recommendation for status.  The representative of Cuba said the organization had not fulfilled its provisions.  Several delegations explained their positions: the representative of Cuba said he would vote “no”; the representative of Uruguay supported the organization’s recommendation; the representative of China said he would vote “no”, as the organization was not compliant with provisions of resolution 1996/31; and the representative of India said it focused on only a few countries and other issues existed, hence he would vote “no”.  The Committee then rejected the proposal to recommend the granting of status, by a vote of 4 in favour to 11 against, with 1 abstention and 3 absent.  The representative of Greece and an observer from the United Kingdom expressed disappointment over the voting results, emphasizing that the organization had answered all questions and raising concerns of the Committee’s repeated deferment of certain applications.

Citizens’ Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (Republic of Korea) — as the represented of China asked how the group maintained its independence.  The representative of South Africa asked if the group had links with the Government.

Congrès National des Arméniens Occidentaux (CNAO) (France) — as the representative of Turkey requested a list of partners.

Dansk Flygtningehjælp (Denmark) — as the representative of the Russian Federation asked for details on projects in the territory of the northern Caucasus.

Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB) (Republic of Korea) — as the representative of Iran asked for details on activities.

ELIGE Red de Jóvenes por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos, A.C. (Mexico) — as the representative of Nicaragua asked for details on projects in Latin America.

Electronic Frontier Foundation, Inc. (United States) — as the representative of China asked for details on the organization’s position on the right to privacy in the digital age and on security.

European Muslims League (Switzerland) — as the representative of Israel asked for an explanation of why the head of the group had made anti-Semitic comments.

Fair Trials International (United Kingdom) — as the representative of Burundi asked about completed projects in Burundi and with which partners.

Federal Lezghin National and Cultural Autonomy (Russian Federation) — as the representative of Azerbaijan said actions of the organization had affected citizens of Azerbaijan and requested further information on its mandate.

Global Network of Sex Work Projects Limited (United Kingdom) — as the representative of Cuba asked about projects and their impact in Latin America, and the representative of the Russian Federation asked if the organization’s activities were agreed upon with United Kingdom authorities.

Hokok Coalición Internacional Contra la Impunidad (Spain) — as the representative of Israel asked about projects in Bahrain.

Inimõiguste Instituut (Estonia) — as the representative of the Russian Federation said that the organization’s partners had been involved in terrorist acts, including blowing up electricity stations in Crimea, and requested explanations.  Observers, including those from Estonia, Finland, Hungary and the European Union, supported organizations that provided a voice for indigenous peoples, urging the Committee to recommend that such groups be granted consultative status.

Insamlingsstiftelsen Kvinna till Kvinna (Sweden) — as the representative of the Russian Federation said the organization’s website did not list the Russian Federation as a country in which it operated, yet projects seem to be implemented in Russian regions.  He asked for details on projects in the Russian Federation and for the reason why the Russian Federation was left off the website.

The International Association of Genocide Scholars, Inc. (Canada) — as the representative of Turkey asked for details on the organization’s involvement in conferences.

International Dalit Solidarity Network (Denmark) — as the representative of India asked for details on financial transactions with other organizations.

International Gulf Organization FZ-LLC (Switzerland) — as the representative of Iran asked for information of the impact of its recent activities.

Interregional Non-governmental Organization “Committee against Torture” (Russian Federation) — as the representative of the Russian Federation asked what conditions and projects were attached to funding from the British Embassy in Moscow and George Soros’ Open Society Institute.

Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (United States) — as the representative of Iran asked for a breakdown of funding from Canada and the United States, descriptions of projects and an explanation of how it remained independent.  The representative of the United States said the organization had applied for accreditation in 2010 and had answered, since then, more than 60 questions, many of them repetitive.  She listed several dates when the same three questions had been asked.  “This is harassment,” she said, pointing out that there were so many repeated questions that it would take a long time to cover them all.  She proposed that the Committee should stop harassing the organization and that Iran would ask new, not repeated, questions.  She did not agree that the Committee should move forward with postponing consideration of the application.  The representative of Iran asked for the organization’s financial report for 2016 and planned projects for 2017.

James Madison University (United States) —as the representative of Cuba asked about projects in Latin America.

Mittetulundusühing Fenno-Ugria Asutus (Estonia) — as the representative of the Russian Federation said many events hosted by the organization could be interpreted as activities that would promote separatism.  He asked for further details on information on the people who lived in the Baltic States and were now stateless.  The representative of the United States highlighted that the group had support from observers.  The representative of the Russian Federation said non-governmental organizations must follow United Nations goals, not separatist goals.

Muslim Hands (United Kingdom) — as the representative of Israel asked for details on partner organizations.

NK Watch (Republic of Korea) — as the representative of China asked for detailed financial information and income sources from 2014 to 2017.

Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays, Inc. (P-FOX) (United States) — as the representative of Israel asked for a definition of “anti-ex-gay legislation”.

Partnership for Change (Norway) — as the representative of China asked for clarification on the issue of Tibet.

Peace Brigades International (United Kingdom) — as the representative of China asked for details on projects in Nepal over the past three years and the names of local partners.

Peace Islands Institute Inc. (United States) — as the representative of Azerbaijan requested further clarification and a list of its partners and locations where it conducted its work.

Population Matters (United Kingdom) — as the representative of Nicaragua requested additional information on its recent projects.

The representative of Greece said that he noticed a trend that non-governmental organizations working on sexual and reproductive rights were being deferred.  He said he would like to see such organizations granted consultative status.  The representative of the United States requested further clarification on whether the question posed by Nicaragua had already been addressed.  The representative of Nicaragua said the question she posed had not already been addressed.

Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (USA), Inc. (United States) — as the representative of China requested clarification on its position on Tibet and Chinese national sovereignty.

Sex & Samfund (Denmark) — as the representative of Nicaragua requested clarification about the expansion of its work.

Syrian American Medical Society Foundation (United States) — as the representative of Iran raised concerns over impartiality.

The Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and Social Justice (Russian Federation) — as the representative of the Russian Federation requested additional information on whether the organization participated in an anti-drug forum in Moscow on 21 January.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) (United States) — as the representative of Cuba requested additional information on whether the organization had already been denied consultative status in 2009 and why it was being considered again.  He also requested details on its involvement in Mexico’s elections.

The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (United States) — as the representative of China requested additional information on its position on Taiwan and Hong Kong.

USA Refugees & Immigrants, Corp. (United States) — as the representative of China requested concrete examples of projects and activities, particularly regarding refugees from conflict zones.

The representative of United States referring back to Cuba’s concern with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), said the organization had already answered the question.  The representative of Cuba repeated his request for information on why the organization withdrew its application.  The representative of the United States referred to the organization’s application and said that Cuba’s question regarding why the organization’s application withdrew had already been answered.  The representative of Cuba said that the withdrawal occurred in 2009 and asked again why the withdrawal had taken place.

United Sikhs (United States) — as the representative of India requested additional clarification on its focus on ethnic groups and whether the organization had participated in any conferences held in India.

Universal Rights Group (Switzerland) — as the representative of Cuba requested information on projects in Latin America.

Statements

An observer for Armenia said Armenian non-governmental organizations were being mistreated in their efforts to seek consultative status.  The Committee membership was being abusive, sending the wrong message to civil society and not abiding by the principles of the United Nations.