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Voluntary Fund for Participation in the Universal Periodic Review

The Secretariat of the Human Rights Council presents its compliments to all Permanent Missions in Geneva and has the honour to inform them of the establishment of the Voluntary Fund for Participation in the Universal Periodic Review, in accordance with the terms of Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 “Institution-building of the United Nations Human Rights Council” and resolution 6/17 “Establishments of funds for the universal periodic review mechanism of the Human Rights Council”, adopted respectively on 18 June and 28 September 2007. The attention of all Permanent Missions is drawn to the attached information note which describes the purpose and functioning of the Voluntary Fund.


2 April 2008

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

VOLUNTARY FUND FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW MECHANISM

Pursuant to resolution 6/17 of the Human Rights Council, a Trust Fund is established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to facilitate the participation of developing countries, and in particular the least developed countries, in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

I. Purpose

The UPR is a mechanism of the Human Rights Council for reviewing, on a regular basis, the fulfilment by United Nations Member States of their human rights obligations and commitments. All 192 United Nations Member States are to be reviewed within a period of four years in the first cycle - with 48 States to be reviewed every year.

The Review is carried out, with the full involvement and in the presence of the State under consideration, by a working group composed of members of the Council that meets three times per year for two weeks and is facilitated by groups of three States members of the Council which will act as Rapporteurs (or "troikas") appointed by the Council. The UPR Mechanism should not be overly burdensome for the concerned State.

The Voluntary Trust Fund for Participation in the UPR Mechanism is established as a financial mechanism to provide:

- i. funding for the travel of official representatives of developing countries, and in particular the least developed countries, to Geneva to present the national report, take part in the ensuing inter-active dialogue and be involved in the adoption of the report in the UPR Working Group sessions during which their country is considered; and
- ii. funding for the travel of official representatives of developing countries, and in particular the least developed countries which are members of the Human Rights Council and which do not have a permanent mission in Geneva, to act as Rapporteur (i.e. member of the "troika");
- iii. training for Member States in the preparation of national reports.

II. Application for Financial Assistance

Financial assistance from the Fund may be requested by any developing country, in particular the least developed countries, which are Members of the United Nations.

A. Travel

Reimbursement of travel expenses to attend the meetings of the UPR Working Group under point I (i) and (ii) above, will cover:

1. one round-trip economy class ticket per delegation for a representative not residing in Geneva;
2. three days of Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) at the Geneva rate at the time of the meeting, in order to enable one representative not residing in

Geneva to participate in the adoption of the report of the UPR Working Group following the review.

Requests for financial assistance should be submitted, at the latest, six weeks before the beginning of the UPR Working Group session to which the representative will be traveling. Subject to the availability of funds, confirmation of approval will be returned with an indication of the maximum ticket cost to be reimbursed, in accordance with the applicable United Nations rules and procedures for official travel. ***Exceptionally, for the first and second sessions of the UPR Working Group, the Secretariat will accept requests for financial assistance during the session.***

Reimbursement of travel expenses will be made by the United Nations after completion of such travel and on receipt of a claim with supporting documentation, within the above-mentioned conditions, directly to the Government concerned, normally through the permanent mission in Geneva or New York.

B. Training in the preparation of reports

Requests for training shall be accompanied by:

1. a detailed description of the proposed training course for the preparation of national reports;
2. information on training arrangements, including location, facilities, logistical aspects, number and position of trainees;
3. an itemized statement of the estimated costs for which assistance is requested, including costs for travel of OHCHR staff, if applicable.

III. Funding and Disbursements

Contributions to the Fund are made voluntarily by States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations or private institutions and individuals.

Disbursements are subject to the availability of funds.

In case financial resources are insufficient to cover all requests for financial assistance, the following priorities will apply:

- a. requests for travel will be given priority over requests for training;
- b. requests for financial assistance for travel to UPR Working Group sessions from least developed countries will be given priority over requests from other developing countries;
- c. requests for financial assistance to present the national report, take part in the ensuing inter-active dialogue and be involved in the adoption of the report in the UPR Working Group will be given priority over requests to take part in the Working Group sessions as Rapporteurs ("troika member");
- d. order of receipt of requests for financial assistance.

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