

NEWSLETTER

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NEW ! INTRODUCING NGOS AND THEIR WORK AT THE UNITED NATIONS**Q & A****Welcome to the Community of the NGO ALLIANCE****Looking forward to meeting you in Geneva****Introducing ourselves**

Last month we introduced the NGO ALLIANCE and you can read about why this organisation came into being in our January Newsletter *The NGO Insider*. If you did not read that copy, please contact us and we shall be delighted to email a digital copy.

The NGO Insider

We were delighted by the enthusiastic welcome that our Newsletter *The NGO Insider* received. Thank you all for your warm feedback! It is always great and insightful to receive great responses after all our hard work, the many meetings and late hours.

In order to make the information relevant, we need to hear from you regarding what information you would like to find out more about and would be most conducive for your time at the United Nations in Geneva.

We shall keep information coming on events and networking opportunities. It will come in small bits in order not to overwhelm NGO Representatives, though each snippet of information will contribute to the greater picture of how NGOs can work with the United Nations here. We will also add numerous internet links for further information, allowing access to more in-depth information for those UN Representatives who want to come prepared ahead of their visit.

The United Nations Geneva

As we already mentioned, the United Nations in Geneva offers ample opportunities, be this through the promotion of human rights, attending sessions at the Human Rights Council, debating issues related to Special Procedures, interaction with Mandate holders, attending UPR, working with CEDAW, with

EMRIP, the Durban Declaration and so on. With thousands of meetings annually, the United Nations at Geneva is busy throughout the year.

What is New?

Our website! We are in touch with a number of website designers and are discussing how best to organise the information flow in order to assist our membership of NGOs find their way around and focus on the opportunities that the United Nations Office in Geneva offers to NGOs.

We promised that the NGO ALLIANCE would operate like a step-by-step guide to the UN world that awaits your NGO and offer guidance on how to operate more efficiently during your visits to Geneva.

The Human Rights Council

Probably the biggest draw to Geneva for NGOs is that the Human Rights Council (HRC) is located here. With three sessions of approximately one month a year, it provides many opportunities for NGO participation and involvement on substantive levels. The variety of issues being tackled here, with over 36 mandates, means that NGOs will find areas where their expertise can contribute to the substantive debate.

Having a platform like the HRC also allows NGOs to research and contribute. Much of the preparatory work can be done from the NGO's office or from home. If a NGO Representative is not able to come personally to Geneva, we still want to make sure that opportunities are available for participation, e.g. with the preparation or co-sponsorship of oral or written statements or on-line participation with Special Procedures mandate holders.

February to July 2013

Calendar of Events

<http://www.unog.ch/calendar>

February 2013

CEDAW

11 February to 1 March

Human Rights Advisory Committee

18-22 February

Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy

19 February

Link: <http://www.genevasummit.org>

Registration: [http://](http://www.genevasummit.org/registration)

www.genevasummit.org/registration

Human Rights Council 22nd Session

25 February to 22 March

March 2013

WG on Enforced & Involuntary Disappearances - WGEID 99th

11 - 15 March

Human Rights Council 22nd Session

to 22 March

April 2013

Earth Day: 22 April

Universal Periodic Review WG

22 April to 3 May

May 2013

WSIS Forum 13 to 17 May

Human Rights Council 23rd Session

27 May to 14 June

June 2013

Human Rights Council 23rd Session

to 14 June

Environment Day 5 June

UNCTAD Public Symposium

24 - 25 June



The Human Rights Council

WG Discrimination Against Women was established by the HRC in 2010 as there has been insufficient progress related to the Convention on the Elimination of ALL Forms of Discrimination against Women (**CEDAW**) which is often described as an international bill of rights for women.

Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

Universal Periodic Review - UPR The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all UN Member States. The UPR is a HRC driven process, which assesses the actions States have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfill their human rights obligations. The UPR is designed to ensure equal treatment for every country when their human rights situations are assessed. The ultimate aim of this mechanism is to improve the human rights situation in all countries and address human rights violations wherever they occur.

The **Human Rights Advisory Committee**, composed of 18 experts, has been established to function as a think-tank for the Council and work at its direction. The Advisory Committee replaces the former Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

WG on Enforced & Involuntary Disappearances - WGEID deals with the numerous individual cases of human rights violations on a purely humanitarian basis, irrespective of whether the Government concerned has ratified any of the existing legal instruments which provide for an individual complaints procedure. It acts essentially as a channel of communication between the families of disappeared persons and Governments, and has successfully developed a dialogue with the majority of Governments concerned with the aim of solving cases of disappearance.

Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - EMRIP is made up of five independent experts on the rights of indigenous peoples. It meets annually and is attended by representatives from states, indigenous peoples, indigenous peoples' organisations, civil society, inter-governmental organisations and academia.

OHCHR

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) leads the UN's global efforts to promote and protect all human rights for all people. OHCHR empowers people to realize their rights and assist governments in meeting their responsibilities to protect and respect these rights. Human rights are key to developing sustainable societies because only when people are protected by state law and free to exercise their rights can destructive cycles of discrimination, poverty, discrimination and indignity come to an end.



Web-links to relevant issue-specific human rights info

Special Procedures is the mechanisms established by the Human Rights Council to address specific issues in all parts of the world. It calls on mandate holders, e.g. Special Rapporteurs or Independent Experts to examine, monitor, advise and publicly report on human rights situations.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Welcomepage.aspx>

Thematic Mandates

there are 36 thematic issues that are addressed by the HRC

Country Mandates

address human rights situations in specific countries or territories.

Universal Periodic Review

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/upr/pages/uprmain.aspx>

UPR Basic Facts:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/BasicFacts.aspx>

Core Human Rights Treaties

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TreatyBodies.aspx>

Complaint Procedure

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Complaint.aspx>

Civil Society Handbook

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/CivilSociety/Pages/Handbook.aspx>

Civil Society Practical Guides

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx>

The Story of Human Rights

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oh3BbLk5UIQ>

WG Discrimination Against Women

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WGWomen/Pages/WGWomenIndex.aspx>

CEDAW : The Committee on the Elimination of ALL Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Committee: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/>

Convention: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cedaw.htm>

The Human Rights Advisory Committee

has been established to function as a think-tank for the Council and work at its direction. The Advisory Committee replaces the former Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/AdvisoryCommittee/Pages/AboutAC.aspx>

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/AdvisoryCommittee/Pages/HRCACIndex.aspx>

Human Rights Council Complaint procedure

addresses consistent patterns of gross and reliably attested violations of all human rights and all fundamental freedoms occurring in any part of the world and under any circumstances.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Complaint.aspx>

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Communications.aspx>

WG on Enforced & Involuntary Disappearances - WGEID

deals with individual cases of human rights violations on a purely humanitarian basis, irrespective of whether the Government concerned has ratified any of the existing legal instruments.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Disappearances/Pages/DisappearancesIndex.aspx>

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Disappearances/Pages/Procedures.aspx>

Indigenous Peoples

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/Pages/IndigenousPeoplesIndex.aspx>

Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples EMRIP

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Pages/EMRIPIndex.aspx>

video: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Pages/Video.aspx>

To join OHCHR event Mailing List <http://goo.gl/O8snt>

Introducing... Prof. John Knox

UN Independent Expert on human rights and the environment

All human beings depend on the environment in which we live. A safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation. Without a healthy environment, we are unable to fulfil our aspirations or even live at a level commensurate with minimum standards of human dignity. At the same time, protecting human rights helps to protect the environment. When people are able to learn about, and participate in, the decisions that affect them, they can help to ensure that those decisions respect their need for a sustainable environment.

In recent years, the recognition of the links between human rights and the environment has greatly increased. The number and scope of international and domestic laws, judicial decisions, and academic studies on the relationship between human rights and the environment have grown rapidly.

Many States now incorporate a right to a healthy environment in their constitutions.

Many questions about the relationship of human rights and the environment remain unresolved, however, and require further examination.

As a result, in March 2012 the Human Rights Council decided to establish a mandate on human rights and the environment, which will (among other tasks) study the human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and promote best practices relating to the use of human rights in environmental policymaking.



Mr. John Knox is the first Independent Expert on human rights and the environment. He began working on the mandate on 1 August 2012.

John Knox is the Henry C. Lauerman Professor of International Law at Wake Forest University, in North Carolina, where he teaches and writes on human rights law, environmental law, and their relationship with one another.

He received his law degree from Stanford University in 1987. After graduation, he worked as an attorney for the U.S. Department of State, where he participated in the negotiation of the Human Rights Defenders Declaration, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation. Since becoming a professor in 1998, he has advised a number of international and national bodies, including by serving as the chair of a national advisory committee to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, as special counsel to the Center for International Environmental Law, and as a *pro bono* advisor on human rights and climate change to the Government of the Maldives.

OVERVIEW OF THE MANDATE

Building on several other resolutions related to human rights and the environment and human rights and climate change, the Human Rights Council established the mandate for the Independent Expert on Human Rights and the Environment during its 19th session in Resolution [19/10](#). Mr. John Knox began working on the mandate in August 2012. The establishing resolution requests the Independent Expert, among other things, to:

- **Study the human rights obligations** relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, in consultation with relevant stakeholders;
- **Identify, promote and exchange views on best practices** relating to the use of human rights obligations and commitments to inform, support and strengthen environmental policy making, especially in the area of environmental protection;
- Prepare a **compendium of best practices**;
- Make recommendations, consistent with her or his mandate, that could help the realization of the **Millennium Development Goals**, in particular Goal 7; and
- To take into account the results of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (**Rio +20**), and to contribute a human rights perspective to follow-up processes.

Report to HRC22: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session22/A-HRC-22-43_en.pdf

How to Access the Palais des Nations

Information for NGOs

NGOs are at the United Nations because they are in *consultative* status with the Economic and Social Council.

It should be noted that NGOs are on UN Premises for activities that are in keeping with the United Nations purposes and objectives, as defined in the [Charter](#), and are strictly non-commercial.

NGOs are not to conduct their own organizational business or advance their own purpose.

NGOs can attend events at the UN but need to accredit themselves with the agencies organizing these events.

NGOs can present oral and written statements, as per rules set out by agency and will have to register the statements weeks in advance. A NGO in special consultative status may present and register a written statement of not more than 1500 words and/or an oral statement that should not be longer than 2 minutes.

There are specific tables that can be used by NGOs to leave flyers, brochures, leaflets etc.

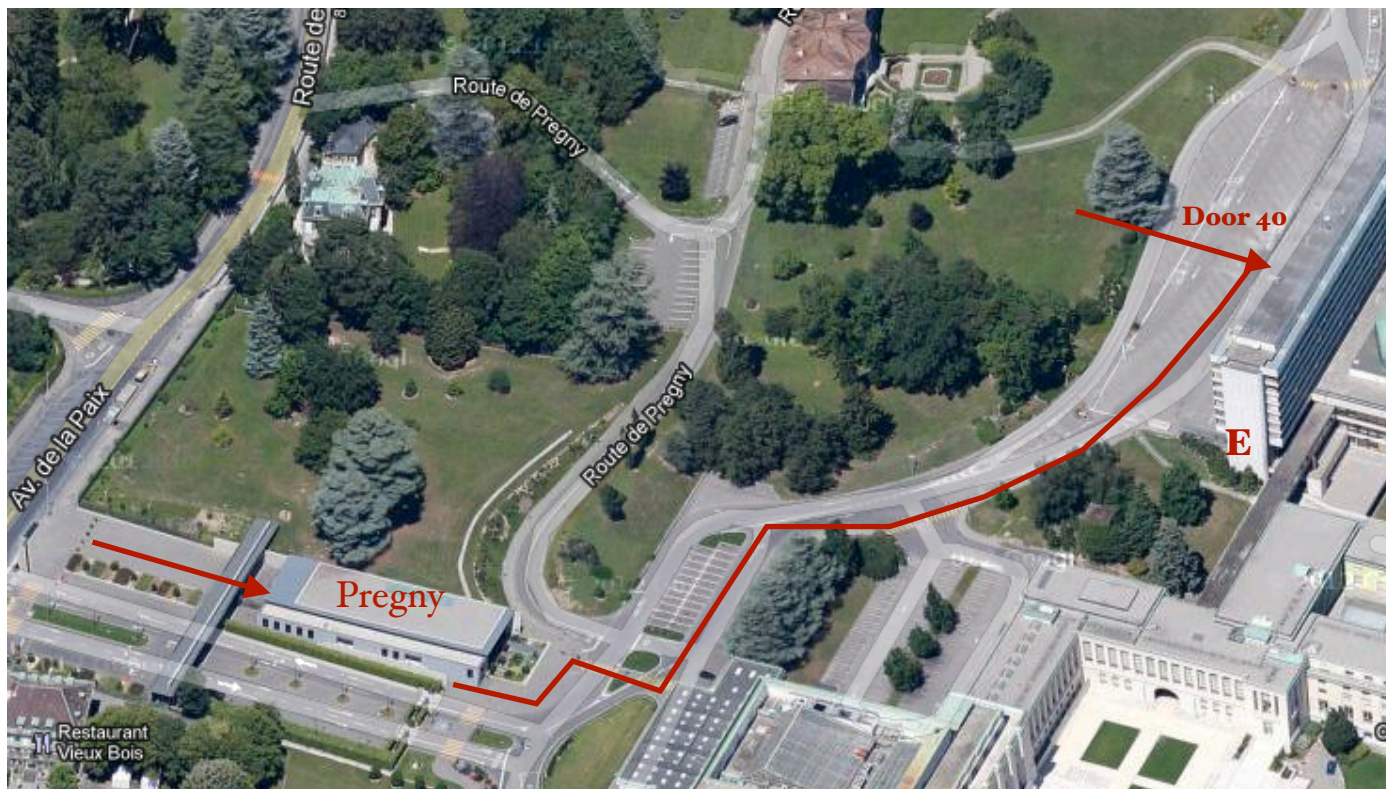
Rooms can be booked through the NGO Liaison Services for activities that are in keeping with the UN purposes and objectives, as defined in the [Charter](#), and are strictly non-commercial.

Pregny Gate, UN Security and Access to the Palais des Nations

Participants enter the Palais des Nations through the public entrance to the Palais known as the Pregny Gate, at 14 Avenue de la Paix. Opening times are from 08:00. to 17:00 hrs (non-stop). It is the main entrance to the Palais des Nations, and the location where the Human Rights Council takes place. All participants will go through security clearance (**Pregny**) upon arrival and the process can take some time. (Please be aware that on some days clearance can take more than 45 minutes). After passing the security and registration desk, participants will head to Building **E**. Building **E** is accessed through Door **40**. Don't forget to take your passport or other photo ID and the letter of your NGO with your name.

Please Note that Badges should be worn at all times

Directions to the Palais des Nations and to Door 40 Entrance



Directions to the Palais des Nations

After passing the Pregny security and got their badge at the registration desk, participants will head to Building **E**. See map above. Exit the Pregny Gate building on the side and go down stairs, where you will see in front of you the Assembly Hall building as per picture A on the next page (pg 6) - Cross over near the left corner of the Assembly Hall (A) and walk towards building you see in picture B. Then pass the visitors/ tours Door 39 (on your right) and the next Door is Door 40.



To Door 40



Door 40



Q&A

Helping NGOs find their way at the United Nations in Geneva

What services/help does NGO ALLIANCE offer NGOs

As we mentioned last month, we are planning to regularly expand the information we are providing via the Newsletter *The NGO Insider*. The next focus will be on a website and we are currently discussing our needs with a number of developers.

How can we become a member of NGO ALLIANCE.

If you want to become a member please contact us through the person who introduced NGO ALLIANCE to you and we'll send you our membership request form. We are hoping to organise membership seamlessly through a web-link and are currently working on a website that will allow us to do so.

Can non-accredited NGOs become members of NGO ALLIANCE?

Any NGO working on issues that are debated at the UN in Geneva can associate themselves and contribute to the substantive debate.

What a else are you planning for 2013?

We are already working on a workshop that one of our members was asked to give and who invited NGO ALLIANCE to be involved with: a presentation on the UN System and how NGOs can get involved. The NGO requesting the workshop is a Swiss human right organisation that advocates for indigenous issues worldwide.

Can we request a workshop on specific issues?

NGO ALLIANCE has expertise within its membership to be able to deliver workshops and propose tailor-made differentiated modules to meet a diverse range of organisational needs.

Why join NGO ALLIANCE?

We welcome members as a strong membership strengthens participation and networking and enriches the expertise on offer. By working together we pool our resources and expertise, that is why we call ourselves NGO ALLIANCE and invite NGOs to join this growing community.

How much is the annual fee?

The annual Membership fee is CHF 50.

What does membership offer?

Membership will give you a regular Newsletters, a website with relevant information specifically for working with the United Nations in Geneva, access to NGOs and NGO networks based in Geneva. We shall be more specific in our next newsletter that will speak in more detail about membership benefits.