
Fact Sheet No. 2

Activities during the Open-Ended Working Group

For those unable to attend the meeting

While NGOs can participate in the meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group as observers, this can be an expensive option. Additionally, it is vital to ensure that there are informed advocates in capitals who can exert immediate pressure on governments if it is required.

For the duration of the meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group we will send regular updates on the state of negotiations. If required we may also ask individual partner organizations to undertake specific activities to bring about a change in position, or to encourage governments to remain firm if they are taking a positive position. To join the email update list, please subscribe at <http://www.nwjc.org.au/avcwl/lists/info/op-icescr.html>

For those attending the meeting

NGOs can participate in the meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group as observers. They may also be accredited to government delegations. This is particularly useful if your government is supportive, though you should be aware that governments seldom make funds available to facilitate your participation.

It is important to have a large number of NGOs present at the meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group for three key reasons:

1. It demonstrates broad-based civil society support for the initiative
2. It creates a climate of accountability for governments as they articulate their views on the development of the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR
3. It enables NGOs around the world to track negotiations and mobilize support as required.

The Coalition will meet regularly during the meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group. In particular, we will organize:

- a pre-meeting strategy session, from 3pm-6pm on the afternoon of Sunday 22 February, venue to be advised
- daily briefings with coalition members
- regular meetings with “friendly” governments
- regular email briefings to coalition members unable to attend the Geneva meeting
- two lunch-time seminars during the course of the Geneva meeting
- a morning workshop on Saturday 6 March, from 9am-1pm, to develop future advocacy strategies, venue to be advised.

In light of the considerable expense of staying in Geneva, the Coalition is recommending that priority be given to participating in the first week of the Open-Ended Working Group.

Accreditation for the Open-Ended Working Group

To participate as an observer of the Open-Ended Working Group you need to be accredited. Appendix No. 4 is the briefing note and the application form prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Simon Walker, at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is responsible for organizing NGO accreditation. You must send the registration form (attached) ASAP to Simon, either by fax on 022 917 90 10 or by mail to UNOG-OHCHR, CH-1211 Geneva 10.