

UK Race & Europe NETWORK

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Briefing Note n° 1

World Conference Against Racism: A UK NGO National Consultation

Many activities have taken place in the past two years regarding preparations for the World Conference against Racism (WCAR) in South Africa next September. At UK level, the Race Equality Unit (REU) at the Home Office and the Human Rights Policy Department (HRPD) at the Foreign Office have been actively engaged in the preparations, together with the Department for International Development.

From the perspective of the voluntary sector, the UK Race & Europe Network (UKREN) has already conducted a national consultation with UK based NGOs and community organisations in summer 1999 for the REU at the Home Office in preparation for the European Conference against Racism and was very involved in the actual event last October. This led to an information and briefing seminar organised in July 2000 attended by over 40 organisations.

These activities have highlighted that although there is a great amount of interest on the part of NGOs to be involved in the process leading to the WCAR, there is still insufficient information regarding the organisation of, and potential participation, in the Conference. For this reason, the Home Office has commissioned UKREN to conduct a further consultation of UK NGOs in the framework of the preparations to the World Conference. This

consultation process, will be launched on 1 March 2001 and will be a unique opportunity for the voluntary sector not only to obtain regular and updated information on the process leading to the Conference, but to be actively involved in its preparations.

Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights:
“ [...] Let me say something about the kind of World Conference I want. [...] What I would like to see is each nation examining its record in improving relations between the elements and groups which make up their society. I would like everyone to face up to the origins of racism and discrimination [...]. I hope there will be a particular focus on issues of gender and racism. And I would like it to strengthen our resolve to reshape our identity in the modern world as inclusive, multicultural, multiracial communities where everyone is treated on an equal footing.”

European Conference Against Racism,
Strasbourg, 11-13 October 2000

This briefing note is the first step of this project, which will also include regional consultations across the UK, and feedback from UN Preparatory Committee Meetings as well as feedback on the Conference itself. It is intended to answer your questions relating to the organisation of the World Conference Against Racism. It is also intended to clarify how the consultation process will take place and how to ensure that NGOs from all over the UK are involved in this project.

Finally, it stresses the fact that it is crucial for the voluntary sector to be involved as much as possible in the process

leading up to the conference as it will ultimately have a strong impact on their local work. The consultation process represents an opportunity for NGOs and community organisations to pass their messages across to government representatives who will be negotiating outcomes at the Conference and its preparatory meetings.

Key dates to remember on this page: 1 March 2001, launch of the National Consultation

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON THE INTERNATIONAL PROCESS

Why a UN World Conference Against Racism?

Since its creation, the UN has been concerned about racism. In addition to establishing international treaties such as the ICERD (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination), it has also designated three decades, between 1973 and 2003 for action to combat racism. The Third World Conference Against Racism is part of that framework of action and will focus on reviewing existing instruments to fight racism and racial discrimination. More importantly, it will then make concrete recommendations to encourage further action to combat racism at international and national levels.

Who, at governmental level, is responsible for handling preparations for the World Conference against Racism?

The three government departments that have been actively involved in the process are: the Race Equality Unit at the Home Office, the Human Rights Policy Department at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Department for International Development.

When and where will it take place?

The World Conference Against Racism will take place in Durban, South Africa, between 31 August & 7 September 2001. An NGO forum will take place between 28 August & 1 September also in Durban. (see calendar of events, p.8)

What has been decided so far about the organisation and procedures of the Conference?

So far, there has been one Preparatory Committee meeting in Geneva in May 2000 which has agreed upon the 5 main themes that will be discussed at the Conference (see text box). It has also encouraged the organisation of four inter-governmental regional preparatory meetings (Europe, Americas, Africa, Asia). Europe's regional meeting took place in October 2000 and was organised by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), from the Council of Europe (for more information and documents from the conference, please see the "useful information available on the Internet" section, p.7). The purpose of these regional meetings was to come up with a consensus position and declaration to carry forward at the Conference in South Africa. Parallel to all these regional meetings, an NGO Forum was

generally organised to allow for input from the voluntary sector in the discussions.

The UN held informal consultations in Geneva in January to prepare for the 2nd Preparatory Committee meeting that will take place in Geneva in May 2001. (see calendar of events, p.8)

How can NGOs go to South Africa and to the preparatory meetings?

In order to attend the conference in South Africa, an NGO needs to get accredited directly with the UN. Individual governments have no part to play in this process. The accreditation process is a long and slow one and will require the NGO to provide the UN with a number of documents such as its by-laws and financial details as well as information regarding the activities of the organisation. The deadline for applications is 31 June 2001 (see box on p.3 for list of accredited UK organisations). The main contact at the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights regarding the accreditation for NGOs is:

Ms Sandra Aragon-Parriaux
OHCHR, Palais des Nations, Room PW-RS181,
1211 GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND
Tel: +41 22 917 9129 /Fax: +41 22 917 9050
Email: saragon.hchr@unog.ch

What themes will be discussed at the World Conference?

The First Preparatory Committee for the World Conference Against Racism held in May 2000 has agreed on the five following themes to be discussed during the conference:

- 1- Sources, causes, forms and contemporary manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- 2- Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- 3- Measures of prevention, education and protection aimed at the eradication of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance at the national, regional and international level;
- 4- Provision of effective remedies, recourse, redress, [compensatory] and other measures at the national, regional and international levels (please note that "compensatory" is in brackets because the Preparatory Committee did not reach agreement on the use of this word);
- 5- Strategies to achieve full and effective equality, including international co-operation and enhancement of the United Nations and other international mechanisms in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and follow-up.

Key dates to remember on this page:

- ?? **31 June: deadline for applications for accreditation to the WCAR**
- ?? **31 August – 7 September: World Conference Against Racism in South Africa**
- ?? **28 August – 1 September: NGO Forum at the World Conference in South Africa**

You can also get hold of an application form for accreditation on the Internet (see useful information section, p. 7). The list of accredited NGOs so far is posted on the net (see useful contacts and information section p.7). You will find below UK organisations accredited as of 18 January 2001. Please note that if your organisation is not on this list, although you have registered, you should check with the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights as soon as possible. You will need to get in touch directly with them for any queries about accreditation or if you wish to participate in any of the Preparatory meetings in Geneva. Organisations that cannot get accreditation for the WCAR are encouraged to link up with those that have and work in partnership in order to be involved in the preparations and the conference itself.

**NGOs accredited by the UN
as of 18 January 2001**

Alliances for Africa
Human Rights Centre, University of Essex
Minorities of Europe
National Black Youth Forum
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
(NICEM)
Oromia Support Group (OSG)
Runnymede Trust
Scottish Council for Minority Rights
Show Racism the Red Card
Sikh Human Rights Group
1990 Trust

If you are accredited by the UN to the World Conference, you can attend any of the meetings organised by the UN. However, you will need to make sure that your representatives register in advance to attend the meetings. For this, you will need to contact the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights before the event (send letters to Sandra Aragon, contacts on page 2). For each meeting, you must:

- 1- send a request using your organisation letterhead by fax or postal mail.
- 2- send a separate letter listing the persons who will be representing the NGO at that meeting.

NGOs will then be informed by post about the status of their request. Please note that you will have to bring a copy of that letter of acceptance in order to attend the meeting.

What has been the NGO participation so far?

NGOs have been encouraged to participate in the Forums that were held parallel to the regional preparatory meetings. Through these Forums, the voluntary sector has been able to influence the political declarations at regional preparatory meetings. NGOs have also been asked to help the UN in its information campaign to mobilise and support the WCAR and its objectives. However, NGO involvement and participation needs to be increased as we get closer to the event.

What is the next step at UN level?

An open-ended working-group has taken place on 6-9 March 2001 in Geneva where delegations have started discussions and negotiations around the draft declaration and programme of action. Another working-group will take place on 7-11 May 2001. Following these working-group meetings, the 2nd Preparatory Committee meeting for the WCAR will take place at the end of May 2001 in Geneva. There, the Committee will continue to discuss the draft declaration and programme of action for submission to the World Conference. It will also decide what sub-themes should be discussed at the World Conference. UKREN's co-ordinators for the World Conference Against Racism Project will be present at the 2nd Preparatory Committee. Government representatives will arrange regular meetings with UKREN and with UK NGOs who are present in Geneva during the Preparatory Committee in order to facilitate a continuous dialogue. Please note that the deadline for registration to attend the Preparatory Committee is 28 March 2001.

What input can the NGOs bring to the next open-ended working-group and the Preparatory Committee in Geneva?

If you have accreditation, you can attend and speak at any of those meetings (see accreditation procedure on p.2). However, you should bear in mind that this particular preparatory process is conducted at inter-governmental level. This means that ultimately, decisions will be made at those meetings by government representatives. For this reason, it is all the more crucial that the UKREN national consultation mentioned in this briefing note takes place as it will allow the NGOs to pass on their views to the Government who will ultimately make the decisions. Thus, if you are not involved directly in the preparation process at international level, you should still keep yourselves well informed on the developments as you might be able to influence them through the consultation process

Key dates to remember on this page:

- ?? **6-9 March: open-ended working-group in Geneva**
- ?? **28 March: deadline for applications to attend the 2nd Preparatory Committee in Geneva**
- ?? **7-11 May 2001: second open-ended working-group in Geneva**
- ?? **21 May-1 June: 2nd Preparatory Committee Meeting in Geneva**

THE UK NATIONAL CONSULTATION (March – May 2001)

In addition to the international meetings and preparations, an NGO national consultation will take place between March and May 2001 for the UK. This will give an additional opportunity for UK NGOs to get involved in the preparation process. It is essential that NGOs take advantage of this consultation to pass their messages across and have a say in the decisions made at international level regarding the World Conference.

What is the purpose of this national consultation?

The Home Office has commissioned UKREN to conduct a national consultation of NGOs across the UK and compile a report with the result of this consultation for them to take forward to the World Conference Against Racism in South Africa. By organising a series of regional consultation meetings across the country, our task will be to identify and channel, in so far as possible, a common agenda on issues for discussion and negotiation that will be conducted by those who go to the World Conference.

What are the main objectives of the NGO National Consultation?

- 1- to have an opportunity to discuss issues surrounding the most important international event in the field of anti-racism for many years;
- 2- to make sure that NGOs have a practical impact on the UK position to be taken at the World Conference. This is particularly important since the decisions that will be taken at the World Conference Against Racism might include concrete recommendations that will impact locally. For this reason, NGOs must be actively involved in the preparation process;
- 3- To make sure that NGOs (especially those who will not attend any of the international Preparatory Meetings or the Conference itself) are fully informed of the process leading up to the World Conference and have a platform to contribute to the discussions by stating their position, or establishing links with other NGOs that might send representatives to the Conference.

What will the consultation consist of?

The consultation will consist of the following 4 phases:

Phase 1: at least 7 regional consultation meetings which will address the issues relating to the preparations for the World Conference Against Racism and will give the participants the opportunity to exchange ideas and concerns (see timetable of events, p.5).

Phase 2: a report by UKREN's projects co-ordinators, compiling all the information coming out of these consultation meetings. This report, which will be made public, will then be distributed to the government representatives before they go to the second Preparatory Committee meeting in Geneva at the end of May where several crucial decisions will be made such as the draft programme of action, and the sub-themes within the five themes set for the Conference. This is why it is essential that as many NGOs contribute to the consultation and agree on several positions that could feed into the debate in Geneva.

Phase 3: feedback on the Preparatory Committee meeting in Geneva and its outcome followed by a postal consultation (the last one before the World Conference Against Racism).

Phase 4: follow up to the World Conference Against Racism and a concluding National Conference to discuss the consequences of the Conference for the UK.

Regular updates on the developments regarding the preparations for the conference, both at international and national levels will be drafted. This briefing note is the first of several that will be sent out as widely as possible throughout the country.

How can I, as an NGO participate in these meetings?

Any NGO that is interested in the subject is welcome to join any of the regional meetings. They are open to all organisations and we encourage those already in the know to inform other organisations that might not be aware of the project. Please refer to the table on p. 5 for contacts in your region.

TIMETABLE FOR THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION MEETINGS

Place	Date	Partner Organisation	Contact Details
BELFAST	16/02/01	<i>Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)</i> Contact: Patrick Yu	3rd Floor, Ascot House, 24-31 Shaftesbury Square Belfast BT2 7DB Tel: 02890 238 645 Fax: 02890 319 485 NICEM@n-ireland.freeserve.co.uk
LEEDS	19/03/01	<i>Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT)</i> Contact: Maureen Grant	The Garden House Water End York YO30 6WQ Tel: 01904 627 810 Fax 01904 651 990 mag@jrct.org.uk
GLASGOW	22/03/01	<i>Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)</i> Contact: Farkhanda Chaudhry	9th floor, Flemming House, 134 Renfrew Street, Glasgow G3 6ST Tel: 0141 332 5660 Fax: 0141 332 4225 farkhanda.chaudhry@scvo.org.uk
EDINBURGH	23/03/01	<i>Black & Minority Ethnic Community Safety Group</i> Contact: Jacinta Barker	Room D6, Craigroyston CH School, Pennywell, Edinburgh, EH4 4QP Tel: 0131 467 7990 Fax: 0131 467 7991 bcdp@cablenet.co.uk
BIRMINGHAM	27/03/01	<i>Minorities of Europe</i> Contact: Deepak Naik	European Office 40 Stoke Row Coventry CV2 4JP Tel/Fax: 024 7644 3475 Deepak@qnaik.freeserve.co.uk
LONDON	05/04/01	<i>Commission for Racial Equality</i> Contact: Eustace Gordon	Elliot House, 10-12 Allington Street London, SW1E 5EH Tel: 020 7932 5336 Lpatel@cre.gov.uk
SUNDERLAND	06/04/01	<i>BECON</i> Contact: Louise Evan-Wong	4a Callerton Place, Fenham Newcastle on Tyne NE4 5NQ Tel/Fax: 01830 540 381 Email: lew@met.uk.net
NOTTINGHAM	04/04/01	<i>Afro-Caribbean & Asian Forum</i> Contact: Veronica Sterling	Unit 1, 35 Ebury Road Sherwood Rise Nottingham NG5 1BB Tel: 0115 969 1224 Fax: 0115 985 7404

What themes will be discussed?

The themes that will be discussed at the regional meetings will be the same as those chosen for the World Conference (see box on page 2). Although these themes were set at the UN's last Preparatory Committee meeting in Geneva, it is important to discuss particular issues that are of concern to NGOs in the UK and which fall within the themes and to make sure that these concerns are included in the final report. For instance, in theme 2 – victims of racism – the issue of multiple discrimination against women and children could be discussed or in theme 3 – measures of prevention – some may want to focus on legislative instruments, whilst others might prefer to concentrate on educational measures. The report coming out of this consultation process will highlight the common issues that come out of the regional meeting discussion but it will also take into account, specific issues that stem from the local context or from specific groups (ie: Irish Travellers, racial discrimination against women and children etc...). It will therefore be a useful document both for government representatives in their negotiations at the 2nd Preparatory Committee as well as for the voluntary sector itself when preparing for the World Conference.

FORMAT FOR EACH CONSULTATION MEETING

What will be the format of these meetings?

The structure (ie; timetable, content etc...) of each event will be the same (with the exception of Northern Ireland which takes place earlier than the others and with a slightly different format)

The general timetable will be the following:

11.00 – 12.15:	PLENARY	<i>Contribution by government representatives (Home Office and Foreign Office) One speaker involved in the consultation process</i>
12.15 – 13.15:	WORKSHOP – Session 1	<i>Two groups both discussing themes 1 & 2 of the World Conference Against Racism</i>
13.15 – 14.00:	LUNCH BREAK	
14.00 – 15.30:	WORKSHOP – Session 2	<i>Two groups both discussing themes 3, 4 & 5 of the World Conference Against Racism</i>
15.30 – 16.30:	CLOSING PLENARY	<i>Contribution by a local speaker Discussions about specific regional variations</i>
16.30 – 17.30:	DISCUSSIONS FOR POTENTIAL MEETINGS ON SPECIFIC ISSUES	

For all the regional meetings, two Rapporteurs will be attending the event (one for each workshop) and the UKREN project co-ordinators will facilitate the sessions. The Rapporteurs will then be responsible for sending us a brief report of the regional consultation meeting.

Will specific issues be discussed, such as gender, youth, or local issues?

During the regional consultation meetings, there will be some scope for discussions on issues that are of local relevance. Issues that are of particular concerns in a specific region will then be taken into account in our report.

Furthermore, there will be a call for the organisation of specific meetings focusing on particular subjects such as gender or youth issues as well as issues raised by Black led organisations. There should be as many as possible, and we are hoping that the impetus for the organisation of such meetings will be started at the regional consultation meetings themselves (see timetable for the events – 4.30pm-5.30pm is devoted to organising specific meetings around these issues).

The conclusions that come out of the various meetings will then be taken into account into the final report.

What are the long-term objectives of the consultation and how will it benefit UK NGOs?

By reaching out to as many voluntary and community organisations as possible, it is hoped that the consultation process will have an impact beyond the conference itself. First, it will encourage NGOs to work together on certain issues, and will build new links among themselves.

Second, it will allow for the strengthening of the NGO voice in the UK. Working together does make us stronger but it is often difficult to find the organisational and financial means to do so. This project will allow for greater communication among the voluntary sector organisations in the UK.

Finally, as already mentioned above, the decisions taken at the World Conference will have an impact at the local level far beyond the Conference itself. This will be the focus of this project in phase 4 (see p. 4), the follow up to the World Conference. For this reason, it is crucial that NGOs are aware of the decisions made and how these might affect their daily work.

For more information on the consultation process or on this briefing paper, please contact:

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Email: Sarah.isal@trt.demon.co.uk

USEFUL INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET

Information	Website
<p>The Race Equality Unit of the Home Office website has useful information on racism-relevant UK policy/legislation</p> <p>The Human Rights Policy Department of the Foreign Office website has useful information and links to other websites on the Conference</p>	<p>http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/new_indexs/index_racial-equality.htm</p> <p>http://hrpd.fco.gov.uk</p>
<p>UN High Commission for Human Rights has a website devoted to the Conference. Quite useful although not always updated.</p> <p>Gives information on the UN side of the preparations to the World Conference Against Racism</p> <p>The "programme of events" section is very good as each event has a link to all the documentation related to that particular meeting or event. (ie: final reports, timetables etc...)</p> <p>The "information for NGOs" heading has basic information on the NGO input in the preparations to the World Conference Against Racism. It is useful but not as updated as the Human Rights Internet Website (better documented and updated regularly – see below for links)</p> <p>All the official documents produced by the UN on the World Conference can be found on the site</p>	<p>World Conference Homepage http://www.unhchr.ch/html/racism/index.htm</p> <p>Click on Programme of Events</p> <p>Click on Information for NGOs</p> <p>Click on Documents for the latest reports</p>
<p>Human Rights Internet (based in Canada) is a very useful website which gives updated and comprehensive information on the NGO preparations to the World Conference</p> <p>Information on the accreditation process as well as the accreditation form for NGOs who wish to attend the Conference. This form should be returned to the UNHCHR as soon as possible by fax or postal mail</p> <p>Updated list of NGOs accredited for the World Conference Against Racism</p> <p>All the briefing notes written by the NGO Liaison Officer at the UN, Dr Laurie Wiseberg, are posted on the HRI website. These briefing notes provide clear and practical information on NGOs preparations for and involvement in the World Conference Against Racism</p> <p>A range of NGO input relating to the World Conference is also posted on the net. These can be accessed by theme, country, or author/organisation</p> <p>Information on the First Preparatory Committee (May 2000), including the final report of the meeting</p> <p>Information on the NGOs Meetings in the last months, with full reports of these meetings.</p> <p>A very well made calendar of events</p> <p>Many useful links to other websites that deal with the World Conference against Racism preparations</p>	<p>World Conference Homepage http://www.hri.ca/racism/</p> <p>http://www.hri.ca/racism/accredited/quest.htm or click on Information note for NGOs not having consultative status with ECOSOC</p> <p>http://www.hri.ca/racism/accredited.ngos-accredited.htm</p> <p>http://www.hri.ca/racism/Background/index.shtml Or click on Basic Information</p> <p>http://www.hri.ca/racism/prepcom/index.shtml Or click on NGO Material</p> <p>Click on First Prep Comm</p> <p>http://www.hri.ca/racism/meetings/index.shtml or click on NGOs Meetings</p> <p>http://www.hri.ca/racism/calender/index.cfm Click on Links</p>
<p>Information on the European Conference against Racism (October 2000) which also held an NGO Forum at the same time as the governmental meetings. The website of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Council of Europe (that organised the conference) is very well documented. Whole section on the NGOs input with documents relating to the Conference and the NGO Forum</p>	<p>http://www.ecri.coe.int/en/sommaire and click on European Conference against Racism.</p>
<p>European Network on Racism (ENAR) And the Internet Centre Against Racism (ICARE) are both on the NGO European Co-ordinating Committee for the preparation for the World Conference against Racism. Their website will therefore be regularly updated with the latest information on the preparations</p>	<p>http://www.enar-eu.org/</p> <p>http://www.icare.to/</p>
<p>Information on the NGO Forum in South Africa that will run parallel to the Conference is organised by a South African NGO called Sangoco (South African Nat. NGO Coalition). Useful information regarding the NGO forum.</p>	<p>NGO Forum Homepage http://www.racism.org.za/NGOFORUM</p>

KEY CALENDAR DATES

DATE	EVENT
February 2001 16 February	Regional consultation meeting in Belfast
March 2001 1 March 6-9 March 19 March 22 March 23 March 27 March 28 March	Launch of the UKREN UK NGO National Consultation at UKREN's National Roundtable in Birmingham Open-ended working-group in Geneva Regional consultation meeting in Leeds Regional consultation meeting in Glasgow Regional consultation meeting in Edinburgh Regional Consultation meeting in Birmingham Deadline for applications to attend the 2nd Preparatory Committee
April 2001 05 April	Regional Consultation meeting in London Reports back from all the regional consultation meetings Drafting of the final report from those meetings by UKREN co-ordinator
May 2001 21 May – 1 June	2nd Preparatory Committee Meeting in Geneva
June 2001 31 June	Feedback from the Preparatory Committee to UK NGOs postal consultation Deadline for applications for accreditation for the World Conference Against Racism in South Africa
August 2001 28 August – 1 Sept. 31 August – 7 Sept.	NGO Forum of the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa
November 2001	Feedback from the World Conference Against Racism Follow up activities around the World Conference Against Racism