



SIKH HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP
NGO with special consultative status at UN ECOSOC
E-mail: admin@shrg.net web site: www.shrg.net
89 South Rd, Southall, UNITED KINGDOM, UB1 1SQ

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Item 2: Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General. General Debate

Thank you. The High Commissioner works hard to increase inclusivity of civil society in the Human Rights Council and engagement with the Office of the High Commission.

The High Commissioner has been a champion of civil society. After all human rights affect civil society and not States. Without active participation by civil society human rights discussions are merely academic without context and reference to reality.

It will be immensely helpful to have some reference to inclusion and engagement undertaken and opportunity offered by the Office of the High Commissioner and Indeed the Human Rights Council in regard to civil society.

An audit, with statistics of incremental engagement in the High Commissioner's report on how many minority based organisations, disability organisations, LGBT+ organisations, regional organisations, environmental organisations etc were met by the office would reassure civil society of the hard work undertaken by both NGOs and the High Commissioner.

While we recognise that not all issues raised here can be responded to, it will be heartening to know whether the Special Rapporteurs and Panels also engage with questions or issues raised by NGOs.

We raise this as there is often criticism in the general public that the UN is exclusivist and does not really engage equitably with civil society. We are sure, like us, the High Commissioner will be keen to dispel misunderstandings with statistical facts.