

CENTRE CATHOLIQUE INTERNATIONAL
CENTRO CATOLICO INTERNACIONAL
INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC CENTRE
GENEVE

WEB : www.ccig-iccg.org

1 Rue de Varembe
Case postale 43
CH – 1211 Genève 20
Tel : 00 41 22 734 14 65
Fax : 00 41 22 734 08 78
E-Mail : ccig@bluewin.ch

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL IMMERSION:
INTENSIVE PARTICIPATORY STUDY PROGRAM

DURING THE 18TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
12-16 SEPTEMBER 2011

1. Background

International Catholic Center of Geneva (Centre Catholique International de Genève - CCIG), is a non-profit association under the Swiss Law, established in 1950 by 17 International Catholic Organizations. CCIG is composed of organizations and individuals who are convinced of the importance of Christian engagement at the international life. The objectives of CCIG are 1) to raise public awareness on the value added contribution of international institutions in responding to the global issues, 2) to improve the effectiveness of the work of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the United Nations, particularly Christian-inspired NGOs, 3) to critically analyze and reflect on the crucial issues of our times and develop appropriate proposals for action. In realizing those objectives, CCIG organizes formation sessions on the international realities for the Catholic organizations and institutions, thematic conferences and working groups linked to the work of the United Nations (human rights, development, labor, and the role of civil society organizations) and publication of monographs and critical articles on pertinent issues confronting society.

2. Introduction

With the establishment of the UN Human Rights Council in 2006, Geneva was reaffirmed as the main focal point of the United Nations efforts related to human rights. Government delegates, UN Experts, human right defenders and victims meet regularly throughout the year in various sessions at the United Nations to address human rights issues. In order to ensure their effective participation in these mechanisms, the main human rights organizations, especially international and regional organizations, have their representatives in Geneva. In recent years, the participation of national, regional and international NGOs have increased significantly.

With the vast range of human rights activities and the complexity of UN mechanisms, the challenge remains to identify ways to better understand the functioning of these mechanisms and to identify the key actors from NGOs and government delegates in order to carry out more effective research and lobbying activities on specific human rights issues.

This intensive participatory program on human rights is a unique opportunity for university students who are interested in human rights issues. It will provide them with direct and first-hand experience in how high level international diplomacy on human rights actually works at the United Nations. At the end of the program, the students will be able to better understanding how to work effectively with the UN Human Rights Council, and to identify the key actors in the human rights lobby and to carry out further research in areas of special interest. The contacts they develop during the program should help generate opportunities for possible internships and future employment.

3. Objectives

1. To understand the overall functioning of UN Human Rights Council mechanisms through direct experience and participation in the Council.

2. To identify and understand the roles of key actors: government delegates, non-governmental organizations, United Nations Experts, and United Nations officers and to enable participants to engage in dialogue with them.
3. To study specific human rights issues and follow the dynamic process of deliberation during the Council Session.
4. To build network opportunities with human rights actors.

4. Methodology

- General Introduction to the UN Human Rights Council Mechanisms;
- Participation at the 18th Session of the UN Human Rights Council;
- Daily morning briefings to prepare and discuss the UN Reports to be discussed during the day;
- Dialogue with selected key actors of the Council: e.g. government delegates, NGO leaders, UN officers
- Daily evening briefings to wrap up the observations of the days activities followed by discussion
- Assignment and discussion: Case study exercise on one of the following issues (this issues will be addressed at the Human Rights Council during the period of the immersion):
 - Children in the arm conflict
 - Right to water and sanitation
 - Toxic waste
 - Contemporary forms of slavery
 - Specific issues according the field of interest of the participant

5. Module

- Introduction to the UN Human Rights Mechanisms
- United Nations Fact Sheet on Specific Human Rights issues
- Working with the United Nations Human Rights Program: Handbook for Civil Society

6. Arrangement

- The program will be organized during the first week of the 18th Session of the Human Rights Council, from 12 – 16 September 2011
- The program will be attended by 5 students/participants. If there is a higher demand, it can be considered to have a group of 10 students/participant.
- The program will be held in English.
- If needed, CCIG can assist logistical arrangements for the participants

7. Budget

- The participation fee is CHF 500 (or US\$ 500) for each participant

8. Contact

- Budi Tjahjono
International Catholic Center of Geneva (CCIG)
1 rue de Varembeé, CP 43, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland
Email: ccig@bluewin.ch