Guide to the Process

The points below are to act as a guide, setting out the role required of the experts and the process to follow to ensure the key output of the regional forum is achieved.

Output

→ The principal output of the regional forum will be a set of recommendations, providing regional insights focusing on education in and teaching of minority languages. In order to do so, the recommendations will need to form at the intersection of the relevant international human rights standards and the Asian and Pacific contexts, and will focus on the interpretation and implementation of international norms. A key reference document in this respect is the UN document *Language Rights of Linguistic Minorities: A Practical Guide for Implementation*.

→ The draft recommendations will be used as a reference document at the UN Forum on Minority Issues, to be held 28 and 29 November at the United Nations in Geneva. The recommendations must therefore be substantive and <u>actionable</u>.

→ They will also contribute to possible guidelines and other activities under the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues on the topic of education in and teaching of minority languages.

Process

→ Each invited expert will be allocated to one of the key topics and working groups for the duration of the regional forum (3 experts per working group). They will work closely with the other experts appointed to the same working group. In each team of experts, a lead expert will have been appointed by the organisers in advance to take overall responsibility for the drafting of recommendations.

→ All experts are asked to arrive at the regional forum with some draft recommendations that can be further developed and used as part of the discussions.

Introductory Plenary

→ The lead experts will be required to introduce their topic in the introductory plenary session. This presentation will outline the issue area to be discussed in the subsequent working groups. The presentation should focus on key points from which recommendations can then be elicited through further discussions. This should preferably be kept to a maximum of 15 minutes and be provided in written form to the organisers so that it can be circulated to the other experts preferably before the conference.

→ Following the presentation, there will be an opportunity for participants to raise questions to the expert during a Question and Answer session for up to 45 minutes.

→ During the presentation and Question and Answer sessions, the other experts that form the expert team for the topic in question will keep a record of the points being raised. These will assist with generating the discussions and to form recommendation in the working groups.

→ Following the introductory plenary, there will be parallel working groups for each of the 3 key topics. The working groups will be limited to a maximum 30 participants to enable a constructive dialogue to be held. Participants will have selected their working groups in advance during the application process.

→ Each working group will also be assigned a Chair who will introduce the experts and assist with the facilitation of the discussions.

Working Groups

→ At the beginning of the working groups, the lead expert will recap the issues to be discussed and summarise the relevant points raised in the introductory session.

→ The lead expert, working together with the other experts, will guide the discussions and capture the points raised through the interventions from the floor.

 → Participants will be required to raise their hand to make an intervention. All interventions must focus strictly on the topic and preferably contain a proposed recommendation. The Chair will intervene if a participant is not keeping to the specific topic.

→ The allotted speaking time for each intervention may be flexible, depending on the number of participants. The expert team and Chair will work together to ensure that there is a broad and balanced range of interventions in terms of region and also participant (i.e. state representative, minority participant, expert/academic participant). Speakers from the floor will be selected by the Chair, who will keep a record of the name and organisation of the participant. It is recommended that a maximum of 5 minutes is allotted to each intervention, subject to the number of participants.

→ From these working group discussions, the expert teams will draft recommendations that focus on the topic and the implementation of existing international norms, based as much as possible on the approach outlined in *Language Rights of Linguistic Minorities: A Practical Guide for Implementation*.

→ In the event that there is limited contribution from participants or the interventions are not clearly focused on the topic and development of recommendations, then the experts should present their drafts and suggestions and request comments and feedback on them.

→ It is envisaged that each working group will develop a minimum of 4 - 5 recommendations. These must be clearly based around the international UN normative framework and the Asian and Pacific context.

→ The experts are required to draft proposed recommendations in-situ. The 3 experts in each working group will therefore coordinate with one another to ensure that the salient parts of the interventions are captured in order that they can later be distilled into draft recommendations. This is vital, as these draft recommendations will be used as part of the UN Forum on Minority Issues held in Geneva on 28 and 29 November.

→ At the end of the 2nd day, a final plenary session will be held. In this session, the lead expert from each working group will present the issues discussed and the draft recommendations proposed for 15 minutes. There will be a further Question and Answer session for approximately 30 minutes for all participants to comment on the proposed draft recommendations.