



New York City CERD Working Group

Making racial justice a human rights priority
Coordinated by the Human Rights Project

- o The International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1965. The United States ratified the convention in October of 1994 with several reservations
- o Main provisions of treaty
 - o Broader definition of racial discrimination that includes disparate impact
 - o Provision of data collection
 - o Economic and Social Rights
 - o Remedy discrimination where it is found
 - o Proactive mandate
 - o Creates CERD committee to oversee implementation
- o The CERD Committee
 - o The CERD committee is made up of 18 "experts," elected by states that have ratified the Convention. The committee meets every March and August in Geneva.
 - o The committee provide an process to hear complaints, review compliance, and generally give direction on the implementation
- o Obligations Under CERD
 - o Under the treaty the U.S. is obligated to file a "state report" every couple of years. The purpose of the report is compliance report on CERD implementation

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- o Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) Participation
 - o When a country submits “state report” to the CERD committee, it is common practice for NGO's from that country to submit reports called "Shadow Reports."
 - o Shadow reports provide supplemental information on the state’s compliance with CERD and often provide a "real-life" assessment of what is happening regarding the implementation of CERD.
 - o Shadow reports can be submitted by individual organizations but are more effective when a coalition of several NGOs submit a joint report.

- o The US has recently taken the first steps in drafting their fourth periodic report to the committee and preparing for their second review by the committee.

- o The Human Rights Project of the Urban Justice Center will be coordinating and submitting a NYC Shadow Report to the CERD committee. We hope that organizations will collaborate on writing sections based on their organizations areas of expertise, i.e. environmental racism, poverty, education, etc. A New York City Shadow Report will feed into a national shadow report being submitted by the US Human Rights Network

- o What your organization can do
 - o Participate in working group
 - o Write your own shadow report or Special Briefs on Key Issue Areas- i.e. Detention, Deep Poverty, Workers Rights, etc.
 - o Provide data in the form of reports, statistics, testimony (including video), anecdotes, interview, etc.