

## **Publication of IMADR “ICERD/CERD Guide”**

To highlight the recent publication of the ICERD/CERD Guide, author and program officer at IMADR’s UN Geneva Office Daisuke Shirane had the opportunity to present it at a private CERD meeting on August 8, 2011. The full text of the ICERD/CERD Guide can be downloaded [here](#). His statement to the CERD is below.

Distinguished members of the Committee, ladies and gentlemen,  
On behalf of the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR), I would like to thank you for giving us this opportunity and I now have the honour and the pleasure of presenting you our new publication “ICERD and CERD: A Guide for Civil Society Actors”.

First of all, let me thank all those who have contributed to this publication, especially Mr. Thornberry for his excellent analysis, advices and for writing the preface of the book, and Ms. Habtom for her sincere support throughout the drafting and publication process. Before turning to the presentation of the new guidebook, please allow me to bring to your attention our prior publication on the same subject. Together with the Minority Rights Group International, IMADR published “The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: A Guide for NGOs” in 2001, which was prepared by the late lamented Atsuko Tanaka with Yoshinobu Namgamine. As one of the few literatures dealing with ICERD and CERD, the older publication was appreciated and utilised by not only NGOs, but also various persons and organisations.

Since 2001, there have been a lot of important developments in the status of the Convention and the work of the Committee, while our society also experienced various changes, not only positive but also negative ones. The current Guide seeks to reflect those developments and changes, while taking over the basic ideas and core elements from the 2001 publication. As such, the new Guide should serve as a practical tool for all those who want to learn about ICERD and CERD, and especially those who seek to effectively utilise ICERD and engage with CERD in order to combat all forms of racial discrimination. It can also be used as a tool in human rights teaching and training.

As you can see in the table of contents, the new Guide consists of three substantial parts: the first part on the Convention, the second one on the Committee and its work,

and the third part on how civil society actors can or should engage with them. Some additional and complementary information is provided in the annex. In total of 16 illustration cases are included in order to exemplify various aspects and possibilities of ICERD, CERD and civil society participation. The Guide, as a whole, is aimed at enlarging and deepening the knowledge of readers and, in particular, developing the capacity of civil society actors to promote and utilise the most important instrument to combat racial discrimination.

Let me also note that a Spanish version is now in preparation with assistance of OHCHR Panama office and NGOs. Translation into some other languages, such as Russian and Norwegian, is planned too in cooperation with local NGOs. In this vein, translation into other working language of the UN and the Committee will be useful for many of us and please let us know, if you have any idea or possibility of translation or cooperation in this regard.

As pointed out this morning, the Convention is a living instrument, the Committee a developing body, and each society is going through various changes. Against this backdrop, we intend to regularly update the Guide at our website to catch up on all relevant developments and changes. We also intend to develop an online database on the good practice of civil society actors in utilising ICERD and engaging with CERD, such as participation in the state reporting system, use of individual communication and Early Warning and Urgent Action procedure as well as the follow-up mechanism. Such database should help us to learn from the experience of others, design and carry out own initiatives, and build on the capacity of civil society as a whole. At the same time, we seek to develop more comprehensive and focused network of civil society actors who should and can contribute to realisation of the full implementation of ICERD.

Regarding the participation of NGOs in the CERD sessions, let me now express our deep appreciation to the Committee for the decision made at its 77th session to hold informal meetings with NGOs at the beginning of the respective week. In addition to or combined with lunch time briefing, this meeting provides NGOs with significant opportunity for more effective engagement with the Committee. At the 78th session, since which this meeting has been practiced, we distributed a questionnaire to some of the NGOs came to Geneva. Indeed, they all appreciated this opportunity.

Regarding the harmonisation of the treaty bodies' work, certainly such an initiative will

make the access of different actors to different treaty bodies easier. At the same time, we also have to ask whether and how it can actually “strengthen” the Treaty Body System, especially regarding the specificity, focus and competence of each Committee. In any case, what we can do is to provide accurate information and assistance for those who are in need. And we will do our best.

Founded in 1988, we have been working on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and racism putting special emphasis on the implementation of ICERD. Concerning the variety of persistent and emerging issues of racism and racial discrimination on the ground, resources and ability of one actor might be limited, but can be complemented by others. Based on this understanding, we will continue to communicate and cooperate with various actors and explore how better we can interact with you in order to maximise the effectiveness of existing and potential opportunities. We wish that our new publication can play a role in this context.

At last, we would appreciate any ideas and suggestions of CERD members on how we can better promote the Convention, support the Committee and develop our work. I will be present at every public meeting of the Committee. Please feel free to contact me in any form. I hope you find the new publication useful. I would like to conclude by wishing you a very productive session and reiterate the great appreciation of our organisation, colleagues and partners for your extremely valuable work.

Thank you.