

## Training diplomats from unrepresented nations: capacity building for effective UN lobbying

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Diplomacy is rapidly transforming in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with an increasing range of diplomatic actors vying for space on the international stage. At the same time, conventional forums of negotiation such as UN bodies remain highly important, particularly for exerting multilateral pressure on states that disregard human rights obligations. Often the UN provides the only relatively safe political space to publicly voice concern and push for positive change. However, anecdotal evidence suggests an escalation of 'bullying' tactics at the UN by states such as China, Russia, Iran and Pakistan to silence and exclude minority communities who have human rights grievances against them.

This 18 month programme of knowledge exchange activities will gather evidence of such tactics and bring key stakeholders together to think about ways that 'diplomats' from marginalised communities can gain access to international forums and Foreign Ministries, present their cases in the most effective way and, ultimately, circumvent such states' tactics and get their voices heard.<sup>1</sup>

There is considerable experience and skill amongst some in the 'unrecognised' diplomatic corps given the protracted nature of many ethnic and territorial disputes. However, at present, there are few mechanisms through which their knowledge can be shared and exchanged with representatives of communities which, due to financial, human resource and political restrictions, do not have much advocacy experience at the UN. This programme seeks to build capacity through activities and outputs co-designed and co-delivered with representatives of minority communities and organisations which promote their cases in the international arena.

<sup>1</sup> This programme adopts a broad understanding of the term 'diplomat' to include any individual who represents and negotiates for a territory, a people or a cause.

### Programme Aims

- i. Make diplomats and UN officials aware of challenges that unrepresented nations face in accessing and lobbying the UN, and offer concrete suggestions for mitigating these restrictions
- ii. Build the capacity of unrepresented diplomats to present their case in international forums and effect positive change.

### Programme activities include:

- Survey of diplomats from unrepresented nations' experiences of lobbying at the UN
- Skills sharing workshops with unrepresented nations' diplomats focusing on (i) gaining access to international forums, (ii) lobbying and advocacy strategies, and (iii) performing as a diplomat
- Train the trainer workshop to pool knowledge on curriculum design
- Side event & lobbying at UN Forum on Minority Issues (2016).

### Outputs include:

- online *directory* of unrecognised diplomats
- best practices *guidelines* for engaging with diplomats
- *policy report* outlining challenges that unrepresented nations face in accessing and engaging UN bodies
- package of *training resources* for unrepresented communities.

The programme is co-ordinated by Dr Fiona McConnell at the University of Oxford and run in conjunction with:

*Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organisation (UNPO)*, a member organisation of 47 stateless nations, minorities and indigenous communities that facilitates their engagement with the international community ([www.unpo.org](http://www.unpo.org))

*Tibet Justice Center (TJC)*, a collective of lawyers and academics who advocate for the Tibetan people's right to self-determination and human rights. ([www.tibetjustice.org](http://www.tibetjustice.org))

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Tibet Justice Center

