



The United Nations Special Rapporteur on housing, Raquel Rolnik, will visit the United Kingdom from 29 August to 11 September 2013 to assess policies and programmes put in place to address issues of social housing, affordability, discrimination and other questions related to the right to adequate housing.

“The UK has voiced its commitment to human rights on repeated occasions, and this mission will give me an opportunity to assess in-depth to what extent adequate housing, as one central aspect of the right to an adequate standard of living, is at the core of this commitment,” Ms. Rolnik said.

As a Special Rapporteur, Ms. Rolnik is an independent expert appointed by the Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a country’s situation or a specific human rights theme. This position is honorary and experts are not United Nations staff nor paid for their work.

This will be the first time such an expert has visited the United Kingdom to monitor and promote the realization of the right to adequate housing and the right to non-discrimination in this context worldwide.

“The UK faces a unique moment, when the challenge to promote and protect the right to adequate housing for all is on the agenda,” the rights expert said. “In doing so, special attention would need to be given to responding to the specific situations of various population groups, in particular low-income households and other marginalized individuals and groups.”

The Special Rapporteur, who visits the country at the invitation of the Government, will visit London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Belfast and Manchester where she will meet with government officials working on housing issues, various human rights commissions, academics and civil society. She will also have the opportunity to do site visits to hear first-hand testimonies and discuss with individuals, campaigners and local community organizations.

The United Kingdom has ratified a number of international treaties which protect the right to adequate housing and non-discrimination in this context, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Ms. Rolnik will share her preliminary findings and recommendations at a press conference to be held on Wednesday 11 September 2013 at the premises of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, from 10:00 am to 11:30 pm

A final report on the official visit will be presented in Geneva by the Special Rapporteur to the Human Rights Council in March 2014.

*Based in Sao Paulo, Ms. Rolnik is an architect, urban planner and a professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of Sao Paulo. She has 30 years of experience in planning and urban land management and is the author of several books and articles on the urban issue.*