

Fifth Forum on Minority Issues

27 and 28 November 2012

“Implementing the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities: Identifying positive practices and opportunities”

Substantive Preparation Note

The purpose of the Forum on Minority Issues is to provide a platform for dialogue and cooperation on issues pertaining to persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and to gather the analysis and comments from a broad array of participants on the challenges faced by minorities and States in creating fully inclusive societies.

The Forum will seek to provide concrete and tangible outcomes in the form of thematic recommendations of practical value to all stakeholders. Therefore, a set of draft action-oriented recommendations will be made available to all participants and shall constitute the basis for discussions during the two-day session. We hope that through your respective interventions and observations you and other participants will contribute to the elaboration of the draft recommendations.

Given that the nature of this Forum is to be a platform for dialogue, we will not seek to negotiate the provisions of the Recommendations or to adopt the Recommendations as a body. Rather, and as called for in resolution 19/23, the thematic Recommendations will be presented to the 22nd session of the Human Rights Council. It is also hoped that a number of follow-up activities will take place to publicize and promote the implementation of the Forum Recommendations.

Our procedure will follow the format of the last four sessions of the Forum. A limited number of presenters will be asked to introduce each agenda item. Discussions under each agenda item will then be open to all participants according to requests to be placed on the speakers' list.

In order to allow the largest possible participation and to have a more inter-active format, we ask that interventions during the discussion periods be limited to no more than 3 minutes per speaker and be focused on the Draft Recommendations and:

a) the identification of challenges and problems encountered with regard to practical implementation of the Declaration; b) the identification of good practices in respect to practical use of the Declaration for the protection and promotion of minority rights; and c) the consideration of opportunities, initiatives and further possibilities for raising awareness of the Declaration and ensuring its practical implementation.

We would prefer that you not read from scholarly papers or articles.

Please keep in mind that all speakers are expected to intervene only on issues relating to the relevant agenda item. While we understand that it is important to address human rights situations in their proper context and that your presentations are likely to be based on country examples, the Forum should not be considered as an opportunity simply to attack the practices or policies of a certain State. It would be strongly preferable if your presentation could be balanced and also reflect positive actions by States and possible solutions to challenges as well as general considerations relating to the particular thematic issue.

Please note that abusive or disrespectful language or derogatory and inflammatory remarks by any participant will not be tolerated during the Forum. All participants should ensure that a sense of respect and tolerance permeates the discussion.

While we do not require submission of papers or articles, we do encourage you to send us an electronic version of your oral presentation. This will be used in order to assist the translators and will be posted on the Forum's website following the conclusion of the session.

We would welcome your adding to your written presentation a brief electronic description of any "best practices" and/or examples of how the principles enshrined in the Declaration have been reflected in your work or that you know of in the field of minority rights. Please keep in mind that we have limitations on the length of documents that we are able to post on the website.