

UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues

Minorities, Equal Participation, Social and Economic Development, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Call for Submissions by 4 June 2021

In accordance with his mandate pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 34/6, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Dr. Fernand de Varennes, will present a thematic report at the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly, which will provide a detailed analysis and highlight the issue of “Minorities, Equal Participation, Social and Economic Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its interdependent development goals (SDGs) make an explicit commitment to [“leaving no one behind”](#) and reaching those furthest behind first. People most likely to be left behind by social and economic development are often those who endure discrimination, marginalization and exclusion, including persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities.

Context

In previous reports, the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues has addressed the interconnection among the human rights of minorities, poverty and the Millennium Development goals (see [A/HRC/4/9](#)), as well as looked into the inclusion of minority issues in post-2015 development agendas (see [A/HRC/25/56](#)). Among other points, the mandate considered that minority issues remained relatively poorly reflected in the emerging discussions, both internationally and nationally, and urged for greater and systematic attention to disadvantaged minorities who constitute hundreds of millions of the poorest and most socially and economically marginalized and excluded people globally. The mandate identified the need for the new global development agenda to include specific goals relating to addressing inequality and promoting social inclusion, which include specific requirements and targets focused on activities to address the situations of disadvantaged minority groups. It was stated that greater attention must be given to the promotion and protection of the human rights of minorities, including the prohibition of discrimination, which offers an important path to development and the full and equal participation of national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. A focus on disadvantaged minorities and specific minority groups, including for example, Roma, people of African Descent, Dalits, would potentially bring much needed social and economic development attention to millions of the most excluded and impoverished peoples globally. It was also recommended to focus more efforts on women from disadvantaged minorities who are most affected by poor access to education and decent employment and who suffer multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

Most recently, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief highlighted the importance of safeguarding freedom of religion or belief for all, including religious minorities, to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Among other issues, the report highlighted that the marginalisation of persons belonging to religious or belief minorities is reinforced by the resulting challenges in accessing essential services, resources and opportunities that they face at the hands of majorities, official State structures and even from members in their own communities. It was indicated that increasingly, evidence suggests that if left unchecked, such discrimination and inequality can precipitate poverty, conflict, violence and displacement, and in

the most egregious cases, the very survival of some minority religious or belief groups can be placed at risk (see [A/75/385](#)).

The marginalization and unequal treatment of religious or belief minorities appear unfortunately to be also widely experienced by national or ethnic and linguistic minorities, and to be at the root of the grievances that can lead to many, if not most, of today's violent conflicts which "relate to group-based grievances arising from inequality, exclusion, and feelings of injustice."¹ Social and economic development is therefore sometimes neither neutral nor fair towards minorities, with some minorities at times disadvantaged or even excluded from fully benefiting from development or participating in the planning of development or represented in the structures and institutions flowing from development in ways which may be discriminatory or in breach of other global human rights standards.

Objectives of the report

Building on the work carried out by his predecessors and other mandate holders in this area, the Special Rapporteur will examine the way the human rights of minorities and their equal participation in social and economic development and related issues are addressed in international and national efforts to fully achieve the 2030 Agenda. The current thematic report will consider how the human rights of persons belonging to minorities are to be understood in the context of the 2030 Agenda, and particularly how the equal and inclusive participation of minorities in social and economic development matters are to be understood and implemented. It will also follow-up to some of the key recommendations previously issued by the mandate in relation to minorities and development, and will encourage all stakeholders to mainstream the human rights of minorities in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Call for submissions

In accordance with the established practice of thematic mandate-holders, the Special Rapporteur welcomes inputs by States, UN agencies, regional and international organizations, national human rights institutions, civil society, scholars and research institutions, and others who may wish to submit for this purpose. Such submissions may include, for instance, recommendations, evidence and case studies. The following questions are intended to guide submissions:

1. Please provide any information of the promising policy and programme approaches at the national and international level to protect the human rights of minorities and strengthen their inclusion, especially minority women, in the context of efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda, including SDG 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 16.
2. Please provide any information about efforts to monitor inequalities in attainment of the 2030 Agenda based on ethnic, religious, linguistic or national identity in relation to social and economic development and the participation of minorities.
3. Please provide annual data on national unemployment rates and poverty levels, as well as the education completion rates since 2010 for the general population, as well as disaggregated data for national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

¹ United Nations; World Bank. 2018. Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict. Washington, DC: World Bank.

4. Please provide any examples of existing institutional mechanisms to gather disaggregated data to allow for in-depth analysis of human rights and social and economic development enjoyment across different population groups, including minority groups.
5. Please provide any information of the discrimination, marginalization and exclusion experienced by national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, especially minority women in the context of efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda, in particular in SDG 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 16 so that 'No one is left behind'. Please provide examples of good practices to address these situations of recognized marginalization or exclusion of minorities.
6. What are the identified challenges in mainstreaming the human rights of minorities in implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular in SDG 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 16 so that 'No one is left behind'?
7. Please describe to what extent and how are persons belonging to minorities and their representative organizations involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the programmes and initiatives related to SDGs implementation, in particular in SDG 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 16 so that 'No one is left behind', especially in relation to inclusive and sustainable social and economic participation where minorities are not excluded or disadvantaged in discriminatory ways.
8. Please provide information on budgetary allocations made in support of delivering on the 2030 Agenda for national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.
9. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the socio-economic situation of national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and the efforts to fully achieve the 2030 Agenda?
10. Please provide any other relevant information.

Submissions and inputs on the above-mentioned areas can be submitted in English, French or Spanish and addressed to the Special Rapporteur by email to minorityissues@ohchr.org by 4 June 2021.

Submissions and inputs will be considered public records unless expressed otherwise.