

**Seventh session of the Forum on Minority Issues on "Preventing and addressing violence and
atrocities targeted against minorities"**

**UNICEF, 25 November 2014
Opening of the Forum on Minority Issues**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Distinguished Chairperson,

UNICEF is pleased to address the Forum on Minority Issues at its seventh session.

Just last week, the world celebrated the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the most comprehensive human rights treaty and legal instrument for the promotion and protection of children's rights: the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Minority children are entitled to the full enjoyment of the rights proclaimed by international human rights law, including the CRC, which includes specific protection for the rights of minority children.

Data show that remarkable progress has been achieved in children's rights over the past 25 years. However, too many of the commitments made to children – including minority children – have yet to be fulfilled. Inequality and discrimination remain among the biggest challenges to the realization of children's rights. The quality of children's lives continues to vary by factors including where they are born; their ethnicity; and whether they are a boy or girl.

Combating inequality and discrimination requires first and foremost identifying children who are discriminated against and excluded from services and opportunities. As the Committee on the Rights of the Child has repeatedly stated, we must do more to ensure that data is disaggregated, including by membership in minority groups, ethnicity and religion in order to track inequalities. We must ensure that this data is analyzed, disseminated to the public and used to assess progress in realizing children's rights, including by children themselves and their communities in order to ensure no one is left behind.

The ongoing process of designing the Post-2015 Development Framework provides the opportunity to address the implementation gap between universal children's rights and hitherto inequitable results. To this end, we believe that the Post-2015 Development Agenda must explicitly identify the most vulnerable groups of children – including minority children – and address the root causes of the situations of inequality, discrimination, stigma and marginalization that they face. Further, the vision, goals and objectives for the Post-2015 Agenda cannot be achieved unless children are living free from fear and protected from violence, exploitation and abuse. Protecting children saves lives and allows them to participate positively in society and contribute to creating the world and the future we want.

UNICEF welcomes this year's focus of the Forum on violence and looks forward to reviewing the outcome of this session. Considering the magnitude of discrimination that minority children continue to face, and the impact of this discrimination on their rights and lives, all of us, both inside the UN system and without, must be prepared to do more. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and as we forge a new development agenda, we must increase our efforts to ensure that the voices of all children, including minority children, are heard, and that no child is left behind.

Thank you.