

POSITION PAPER OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON MINORITY ISSUES

Mainstreaming Minority Issues in the Summit of the Future and the Pact for the Future

In his report to the Human Rights Council in March 2024, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues has committed himself to making “strenuous efforts to ensure that minority issues are included in the post-2030 agenda”.ⁱ

Following this pledge, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues is seeking support to ensure the inclusion of minority issues in the Summit of the Future as well as its outcome document, the Pact for the Future.

The Special Rapporteur on minority issues hereby:

- 1. *Underscores*** the importance of reflecting minority issues holistically and adequately throughout the Summit for the Future and the Pact for the Future, in representing actions to safeguard the future of all the peoples of the world.

- 2. *Calls*** for the inclusion of minority issues in at least three sections of the Pact for the Future:
 - a. In the **Sustainable Development and Financing for Development Chapter**: accelerating progress and fully implementing the Sustainable Development Goals means that no one, including minorities, is left behind in the process, and that the realization of human rights of all, including of minorities, without discrimination, is part and parcel of achieving sustainable development.

 - b. In the **International Peace and Security Chapter**: adequately handling minority issues is both a conflict prevention measure and an essential part of a robust post-conflict peacebuilding process to ensure durable peace.

 - c. In the **Youth and Future Generations Chapter**: key to shaping sustainable and adaptive communities is promoting among young generations a societal environment that values diversity through respecting and protecting minority rights.

- 3. *Urges*** the meaningful and participation of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, including minority children and youth changemakers, in shaping the Summit of the Future and in impacting the Pact for the Future. This also includes leveraging the outcomes of the 2024 UN Civil Society Conference in Nairobi.ⁱⁱ

ANNEX:

Background

On 21 September 2022 in New York, at the High-Level Meeting on the 30th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres underlined that “the protection of minorities is integral to the mission of the United Nations”.ⁱⁱⁱ He also emphasized that “the promotion of those rights is vital to advancing political and social stability and preventing conflict within and between countries.”^{iv}

The significance of treating persons belonging to minority groups as an integral but differentiated part of societies is also found in the Preamble of the 1992 *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*, which states that “the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to the political and social stability of States in which they live,” as well as to “the strengthening of friendship and cooperation among peoples and States”.^v

The cost of neglecting minority issues cannot be underestimated. This concerns the fair enjoyment of human rights by all and the pledge to leave no one behind, as minorities often face the most devastating socio-economic conditions and restrictions to their civil, cultural, and political rights. It also matters in light of the risk of instrumentalizing the fate of minorities by neighbouring States, which constitutes a potential threat to peace and security. Despite these compelling reasons for addressing minority issues front and centre, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres reiterated on 21 September 2022 “the hard truth” that “the world is falling short. Far short. We are not dealing with gaps – we are dealing with outright inaction and negligence in the protection of minority rights.” The Special Rapporteur on minority issues concurs and cannot accept this outright inaction and negligence.

The adoption of the Pact for the Future, next September in New York, is the opportune occasion to correct this unfortunate and unacceptable situation that minority rights have been left behind: **the time to reinvigorate the multilateral system to advance minority rights is now.**

ⁱ A/HRC/55/51, § 46.

ⁱⁱ One of the documents highlighted at the 2024 Civil Society Conference in Nairobi is the “Black Paper: Statement of Commitment to Representing the Voices and Needs of Minorities in the United Nations Summit of the Future and the United Nations Agenda 2030” by the Global Minority Parliamentarians Caucus, which the Special Rapporteur on minority issues signed alongside minority members of parliaments, youth changemakers, and traditional leaders.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2023/03/special-rapporteur-minority-issues-there-has-been-little-or-no-significant-development#:~:text=At%20the%20high%2Dlevel%20meeting,preventing%20conflict%20within%20and%20between>

^{iv} Ibid.

^v <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-rights-persons-belonging-national-or-ethnic>