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Thank you very much Madam Chair,

First of all, I wish to begin by stating that Nigeria, also my country, recognises the vital and critical importance of issues of equality in educational opportunities. And on that account, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides for equal and adequate opportunities to education for all. This in fact, is in tandem with UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education, especially Art. 4, which seeks to promote ideal of equality of access.

In line with the constitutional provision, an Act of Parliament was enacted who seeks to explicate and give [the fact] to the Constitutional provision on equality in educational opportunity. This Act is referred to as the Compulsory Free Universal Basic Education Act 2004, this Act has [caused] the importance of inclusion and goes into some details to name disadvantaged groups, who have been excluded from participation in education. They have been excluded on an account of their mode of existence or lifestyle and other cultural factors. One of these groups is the "nomads" who number at 12 million people and the "nomads" are themselves divided into pastoral nomads, migrant farmers, and migrant fisher folks. Indeed, a special commission – national commission for nomadic education, was created by a Decree number 41 in 1990, with a specific mandate of providing adequate and quality education for nomadic communities in the country.

Another very important group that was mentioned in the law was the 'almateri'. This is a group of essentially young males, between the ages of 5-12. Children whose parents released them to religious teachers to receive some form of [Quaranic] instruction. Unfortunately, they do not spend any quality time receiving this form of education. Rather, they roam around on the streets begging for arms and engaging in minor jobs to find some money for their teachers. These kids who are of the ages of 5 and 12 as I said earlier, are completely excluded from modern education.

And so there is a need for them to get involved in the larger context of the Universal Basic Education of the country. And this obviously poses a very tough challenge for the commission. Now a special program had to be designed for these children as well as for the nomadic groups. And these programs have actually significantly had to be developed in order to take care of the deficiencies of the existing educational system, which is irrelevance of the existing curriculum and the language of instruction which is basically, language of the larger society which not so much the language

of the pastoralists or language of the [other men]. So the question of language in the course of who is supposed to teach also became a major challenge.

And other important challenges again within the context of providing the special education is provisional instruction materials in the appropriate language again. And all of these [point] to the question of quality. To what extent can we be so sure that the kind of education with the context of these deficits that we just outlined, to what extent can we be sure that the kind of education these children are getting is about the same type of education that mainstream children are getting? So still even within the context of the new provision that is till the elements of inequality to the extent that is very difficult for us to say that, this equality issue and equity issue is going to be addressed wholly. So I think this is a critical legal question that we need to continue to pose. As a result of this basic deficit that we were able to identify lack of good teachers in terms of quality of teachers, language of instruction, supply of adequate and good instruction materials to these institutions are not there. So it is very important for us to find a way of addressing these vital issues, so with this and simple commence of mind I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.