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## **Introduction**

As stated in the background document, eloquent constitutional provisions on minorities’ rights to political participation alone are proving to be inadequate to bring about meaningful participation of minorities groups. In fact, in most cases the problems that minorities are facing, rather than being with legal frameworks *per se*, they tend to be more with the application of the constitutional provisions and how to practically harmonize these provisions with other national interest driven policies. Moreover, in situations where for decades chronic inequalities have reigned and negative stereotypes towards minorities have been transferred from generation to generation, constitutional provisions alone do not suffice to guarantee minorities’ participation. In this regard, I would like to shade light on some of the key areas raised in the background document.

## **Capacity Building**

Capacity building plays a vital role towards an effective political participation of minorities. Of course capacity building constitutes a broad range of issues. In this context, by capacity building I am simply referring to the human resource development of minority groups and organizational development of minority organizations. One of the major impediments to minorities-representatives’ effective participation is the lack of knowledge of both national and international human rights mechanisms pertinent to minority groups and the skills to articulate and voice the interests of their constituency in broader national political framework. Therefore, continuous short term trainings for minority representatives have to be given in the areas of international, regional and national human rights mechanisms, political advocacy and cross cutting development issues. On the other hand, minority organizations need to be equipped with knowledge and skills to provide trainings for their communities in their vernacular language where it is relevant. Most of the time, States sponsored

capacity building programmes rather than helping minority groups to think and articulate their interests on their own, they lean toward indoctrinating minority groups into the mainstream political system. Thus, such capacity building for minorities would be more effective if carried out by international organizations or independent specialized training institutions.

## **Land Rights**

For minorities who are concentrated in a certain geographical area, the right to self determination does not mean anything if encroachment of majority groups into minority areas is not monitored. This means in order for the right to self-determination to be effective it has to be supported with policies that ensure political and economic domination of minority in that particular area. National governments in contravention of this fundamental principle of right to self-determination, have often encouraged people from one part of the country to move into the historical territory of the minority groups. Such large-scale settlement programmes are often deliberately used as a weapon against minority, both to break open access to their territory's natural resource, and to disempower them politically, by turning them into a minority even within their own traditional territory. In such situations where the political demography is in favour of the majority groups in minority regions, the right to self determination would hardly serve the interest of minority groups. Therefore, the right to self determination in order to be effective and genuine, it has to be accompanied with minority's rights to exclusive use of their traditional land and certain disincentives to be placed on internal immigration to reduce the number of migrants into the homeland of the minority groups. It is only where national minority groups form a majority in their territory that the concept of right to self determination could be meaningful.