

Universal Esperanto Association (UEA)
Forum on Minority Issues / 4th session
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Women belonging to minorities and their effective participation to economic, social and cultural life

Madame President, dear participants,

My name is Stefano Keller and I represent the Universal Esperanto Association. Esperanto is the international neutral and fair language used in interethnic communication by the citizens of more than 100 countries around the globe.

Language diversity is fundamental. It is an indispensable element for the exchange between persons participating in economic, social and cultural activities in society. The Universal Esperanto Association (UEA) has been supporting minority languages for over 100 years.

During yesterday's session, we heard several reports about the non-respect of this fundamental right, which is stipulated in the *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities**, adopted by the General Assembly of the UN in 1992.

Women belonging to minorities face multiple forms of discrimination from their childhood, and thus are particularly vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion. How can they effectively participate in the economic, social and cultural life if their fundamental right, the possibility to be able to understand and be understood in their mother tongue is not guaranteed to them?

Hence, targeted measures must aim at combating all specific forms of discrimination women belonging to minorities are the victims of.

Thank you for your attention.

* Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted by the General Assembly, 1992, 47th session (A/RES/47/135, 18 December 1992) – <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/dhlf/resguidf/resinsfr.htm>