

Madam Chair the historic and UN declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and those by the member states of the UN is a clear, profound and conceptually dauntless testimony that seeks to empower minorities around the world to defend their rights. However since its adoption, now for more than 20 years is ineffectively used of the declaration by the member states to protect minorities [...].

This also remains the biggest challenge and obstacle faced by Buddhist religious minorities, some of the evidence that we would like to bring to the attention of this minority forum is about the proposed restriction of Mes Anyak and ancient place, 40 kilometres from Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, which used to be a stopover on the Silk route highway about 300 years ago. The Afghanistan government has granted a concession to the China Metallurgical Group Corporation to mine copper in the city of Mes Anyak which is commencing in December 2012 in spite of the strong opposition from many Buddhist minorities all over the world including archaeologists and [...]. Thirty years of armed conflict in Afghanistan has suffered the loss of and desecration of thousands of objects and hundreds of sites, such as the city of El Hammam and Bamiyan a site which would eventually be unlisted as a site protected, but too late. Further the heritage of Afghanistan is once again faced with a violation and impending loss this time in the case of the immense Buddhist site of Mes Anyak.

We believe that while economic development through the mining of precious minerals is necessary however the justification of the Afghan government cannot just become an additional tool or excuses for further restriction of an already weakened heritage. As we are all aware the 20th anniversary of the adoption of historic UN declaration on human rights of persons belonging to a national or ethnic, religious and linguistic heritage conventions minorities also coincide with the 40th anniversary of the celebration of the world heritage convention which was adopted on 16th 1972. Therefore we strongly urge the minority forum to request the various UN bodies including UNESCO to ensure that a site of Mes Anyak Afghanistan is listed immediately, on the list of endangered sites in the world heritage. Thank you