

Thank you Madam President, as representative of the Swiss National Youth Council I would like to thank the independent expert on minority issues for choosing youth as one of her priorities for this year and all the young fellows who spoke here yesterday.

As the youth delegate from Switzerland to the UN my self a member of the 6% Italian speaking minority in the country, the promotion of minority rights from a young perspective has been a priority throughout my mandate, this year at both national and international levels. This forum and the recommendations it presents are of great importance for the implementation of the declaration especially in the field of education. For young persons and youth organisations these include non-formal education something that was promoted in the recommendations of the first session of the forum but is missing in the current draft. Where it could be inserted in paragraph 34 and 39. however this status and duration of this forum are evidence of the lack of political will among many member states here at the UN, on this issue. Two days is usually more appropriate for a workshop not a forum on this crucial subject, a permanent forum on minorities issues on the other hand would ensure a longer and institutionally ensured engagement. Recognition of youth belonging to minorities at the UN is another critical issue to resolve. Just last year the UN organised a high level meeting on youth in the outcome document of the meeting, minorities are not even mentioned once. These are the main challenges for the future, providing opportunities and empowering minorities and young persons belonging to minorities. To this effect the establishment of a focal point on minority youth such as a minority youth caucus, composes a network of young persons would promote a youth perspective at this forum and other UN conferences in coordination with civil society, governments and activists worldwide.

Madam president in June of this year, the Rio plus 20 conference produced a famous document called "the future we want", the three mentions made to minorities in the 53 pages long document concentrated only on their ethnic dimension, this is neither the attitude nor the future we want. So what future initiative do we want for minority youth? We want minorities to be recognised as such, minority groups with collective rights accorded to them as such, including education and participation. We want the right to participate in political life of states to be explicitly mentioned, we want a comprehensive, internationally binding instrument in minority rights to acknowledge all of these things as well as the role of minority youth. We want a UN permanent forum on minorities and we want a minority youth caucus to bring forward all of these issues with a youth perspective. This is the future we want for minority youth.

Thank you Madam President.