

## Remarks by the Chairperson of the Forum on Minority Issues (concluding remarks)

Thank you very much. That was the last speaker on my list. Excellences, experts, colleagues, representatives of civil society, ladies and gentlemen.

Now that we've had the last speaker this takes us to the last part of or the end rather of this segment and in order to conclude this very heavy gender we've had – with your permission – I would like to share with you my final comments.

Now through this wealth of presentations and the contributions of proposals for recommendations which we have received from both the panellists and the participants since yesterday when we began our work in this 5<sup>th</sup> session of the Forum. All of the rights in the Declaration have been the subject of a very complex, critical, and detailed analysis and the high points were the women and men and especially young people who belong to minorities from various areas and environments about of what they've actually experienced themselves, and the problems that they've run up against in circumstances that are often hostile. As well as the faith and the hope that they have about a better World which is the reason why they've come here to this Forum.

In spite of the 20 years that the Declaration has been in existence is never the less a document that hasn't actually delivered everything that it could. In other words, the essence of it. It is the fruit, the result of a consensus which we wherever possible must continue to nurture and consolidate through a pooled, collective and renewed commitment supporting the promotion and protection of rights. I'm talking about rights of persons belonging to minorities.

Of course this goes hand in hand with the implementation of the regional, international legal instruments about human rights which are to be of a binding nature which also protect, and which also guarantee the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

What I will retain is that among the main challenges that are mentioned and are being faced down by everyone here are the deficit in understanding and the actual ownership of the Declaration by the minorities themselves, and also the lack of a legal acknowledgment and recognition, which is absolutely essential of the existence of minorities in numerous places in the world, as well as the non-integration or shall we say, the insufficient integration of the principles that are contained in national legislation. This unfortunately has as a consequence the fact that the fundamental rights and needs and special concerns for minorities are being taken into account in the political plans that are adopted and implemented in a majority of states where these people live. And that is where it is very relevant to talk about institutionalization of this Forum which is dedicated to issues of minorities as a place where there can be very comprehensive exchanges among all stakeholders. I'm talking about Member States, NGOs, specialised agencies of the UN system, intergovernmental institutions or government regional system for the protection and promotion of human rights, independent experts, and representatives of minorities.

Finally, it is critical for every single one of us to leave this Forum and to attach more importance to all the recommendations formulated by the Forum during the course of these sessions. Seeing to it, that there is the adoption and preparation of new legislation, policies, plans which are additional, and which fit the needs of minorities.

All of the rights are important. All of them. And must, absolutely must be respected. But from my point of view, special action needs to be placed on education, on the promotion and respect and the support of languages and elements of the cultural identity of people belonging to minorities.

Allow me to express at this stage my thanks to all of the distinguished representatives of permanent missions who have had kind words and congratulations addressed to me. I would also like to express my thanks to the Member States who were so good as to exempt the burden of the chairmanship of this 5<sup>th</sup> session should fall to me.

Finally, I would like to thank the interpreters, but in particular the members of the Secretariat of the Forum who have assisted me with vigilance and whose professionalism have made a very important contribution to the proper holding and success of our discussions.

I would like to offer an opportunity now to the Independent Expert to address her concluding remarks. And we look forward to this. Every time we meet her, we have an excellent memory of our time spent with her.

You have the floor Madam.