

## **6th session of the Forum on Minority Issues**

### **V. Promotion of constructive interfaith dialogue, consultation and exchange**

Faith Matters.

Thank you, madam chair,

Faith Matters, a conflict resolution organisation working on interfaith and intersectoral issues, in a range of issues across the world. We want to stress cautions about the overstating role of community leaders in discussing dialogue and work. The position resources and voices of community leaders can be extremely helpful but they cannot be substitutes of genuine community engagements. Too much focus on the (...) individuals can create a close circle of leaders who all agree on the need of interfaith dialogue, but who end up having little effect on society as a whole. A colleague from (...) defence movement, speaking at the Faith Matters events suggested that waiting for community leaders to act was unhelpful, their movement can only success when ordinary people began visible standing up and providing counter narratives to boost (...) at large. Religious and community leaders can often promote an (...) in such movements, but they should be careful by doing this. One approach that we have found be particularly effective and that there has been through engaging in additional and educational frameworks to spread a message of interfaith harmony and co-existence school based programs who engage with school children in Pakistan with the aim of encouraging more peaceful co-existence between them. Or public exhibitions such as the role of (...) Muslims project that also address Jewish Muslim tensions by (...) positive accounts of Muslims rescuing Jews, from prosecution during the Holocaust. Having effective examples of this. While (...) these projects is to address an appeal to ordinary people who may have not otherwise been interested in interfaith issues. Rather than those already immersed in the field, we would suggest that such sort of attitudes changing place a key role in interfaith dialogue and that can be more effective that speaking engagements and meetings between community and religious leaders.

Thank you, madam chair.