

International Development Law Organisation
(Male, English)

Madam Chair, distinguished Forum members, excellences,
The International Development Law Organisation the only intergovernmental organisation exclusively devoted to advancing the rule of law, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the 6th session of the forum on minority issues and to share its perspective on how rule of law strategies can be used to promote and protect the right to freedom of religion or belief. I thank the distinguished representative for Italy for having earlier mentioned ideals of cooperation with the government of Italy on this issue.

One of the lessons that IDLO has learned over 30 years of engagement in fragile and post-conflict situations is that the human rights of the most vulnerable and marginalised sectors of society including religious minorities can be realised effectively and on a sustainable basis only where all human rights are promoted in an integrated fashion, in a framework of good governance and the rule of law. In our daily work we therefore seek to promote a culture of justice by empowering citizens and strengthening the responsiveness of legal systems and institutions to promote human rights, peace, justice, inclusion, sustainable development and fair and equitable economic opportunity. IDLO recognises the right to freedom of religion or belief as an integral part of the corpus juris of human rights to reach every individual and minority group are legally entitled. In the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its subsequent articulation in international regional and domestic instruments including the 1992 Declaration, which recognise that states should safeguard the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic religious or linguistic minorities within a democratic framework based on the rule of law. Concerned that serious violations of the right to freedom of religion can undermine the rule of law, disrupt the enjoyment of other human rights and threaten democratic governance, peace and stability, IDLO welcomes the focus of this forum on the rights of religious minorities. In particular we support the adoption of the draft recommendations on guaranteeing the rights of minorities and its recognition of the rights of religious minorities can now be guaranteed in these legal frameworks operate fully on the basis of human rights, the rule of law to ensure effective access to justice including adequate and prompt remedies. Much has yet to be done to achieve the Declaration's aims to empower minorities to live peacefully in full dignity while participating in public, economic and social life. And IDLO remains committed to that aim. Thank you.