

## Forum on Minority Issues

### -Minorities in situations of humanitarian crisis'-

#### Provisional agenda, Item 2: Legal framework and key concepts

**Oral statement presented by:** Sucheta Mukherjee, Christian minority, India. Minority Rights Fellow at OHCHR Geneva.

#### Statement

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

My name is Sucheta Mukherjee and I belong to the Christian minority in India. I am also a Minority Rights Fellow at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

India, is a secular country, that embraces diversity ever since its Independence. Promoting and safeguarding minority rights during humanitarian crisis is imperative. The Government of India has effectively worked with the minorities during humanitarian crisis in the past, however it is important to mainstream the issue of minority rights within the legal framework. The Government of India enacted the Disaster Management Act in 2005, which envisaged the creation of a National Disaster Management Authority. This authority, is mandated to formulate, as well as implement policies, plans and guidelines for the smooth implementation of a disaster management mitigation plan. Hence, it is important that the issue of minority rights be mainstreamed in the National Policy on Disaster Management (2009) and also within the National Disaster Management Authority.

Therefore, I recommend the following recommendations to the government:

1. A section be included in the policy which addresses the specific needs of minority groups; taking into account the specific situation and vulnerability of minority women and children;
2. The issue of minority rights be included and mainstreamed in the disaster prevention and mitigation plans of the National Disaster Management Authority, also in risk assessment and as well as in vulnerability mapping; and
3. A section on minorities and their rights in situations of humanitarian crisis be included on the webpage of the National Disaster Management Authority. This will allow for the wider dissemination of knowledge as well as in mainstreaming of minority rights issues.

Thank you.