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Forum on Minority

Issues

Item 4: Protecting

**humanitarian crises
Statement by the Delegation of Finland**

minority rights during

Mr. Chairperson

We fully align with the statement by the European Union.

Finland stresses the recognition, prevention and eradication of discrimination on multiple grounds and supports bringing up in decision-making the perspective of women, children and young people, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples as well as minorities.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities reconfirms the international law obligation of States to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all human rights without any discrimination. It also underlines the right of persons belonging to minorities to participate fully in society.

In ensuring the rights of persons belonging to minorities, States acknowledge the dignity and equality of all individuals. Fulfilling non-discrimination and participation contributes towards vibrant, peaceful and just societies. These obligations of States also apply in situations of crises.

We therefore warmly welcome the draft recommendations on *promoting a minority rights-based approach during crises*. We wish to particularly highlight and welcome draft recommendation 23 (d) to *States on ensuring that protection measures are participatory, non-discriminatory and sensitive to the specific needs of minorities*.

We warmly also support draft recommendation 25 (g) – addressing the UN and humanitarian and development actors – *which states that particular attention should be given to minority persons who may be subjected to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in situations of crisis, including unaccompanied children, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, and lesbian gay bisexual, and transgender persons. They should also be prepared to intervene on behalf of minority and indigenous refugees who experience protection problems because they lack identity documents or are stateless*. We believe that recommendation 25 (g) should explicitly be addressed also to States apart from the UN and other development and humanitarian actors.

In this context, I wish to highlight that Finland is fully committed to the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities into Humanitarian Action adopted in Istanbul this year. We would like to call upon all stakeholders to endorse the Charter. The Charter applies to all persons with disabilities, including for instance those that belong to minorities. The potential of this Charter should be fully used also for the purposes of protecting and empowering those persons that are at the same time at risk to be marginalized for their belonging to a minority and due to disability. In this work it is of particular importance to be gender-sensitive. It is time to correct the neglect of these persons. This must be done

by ensuring that their specific needs are met and recognizing their leadership and capacity to participate in decision-making also in humanitarian action. Thank you.