

(Item 3)

First of all, we welcome the 9<sup>th</sup> Forum on Minority issues, which highlights the status and needs of the minorities in light of humanitarian crises of all sorts. We also welcome Ms. Rita Izsak, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues and appreciate her efforts in the framework of minority rights.

Mr. President

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority issues visited Iraq from 27/2 to 7/3/2016 and the Iraqi government fully cooperated in ensuring the success of visit, out of its commitment to the HRC and UN mechanisms, under the open invitation of Iraq to these mechanisms. My delegation has considered the draft recommendations, which we hope to enrich our discussions on the core of the Forum.

Mr. President

Iraq's ethnic and religious landscape is highly diverse that it encompasses different religions, creeds and nationalities. These Minorities are deep-rooted in Iraq. Despite the conflicts that Iraq has experienced, coexistence seems to be the dominant feature among people with different religions and nationalities.

The Iraqi government provided protection for Minorities' members and leaders and places of worship. It also ensured minorities' right to participate in public life, and enacted electoral laws to guarantee sufficient representation of minorities in Iraqi Council of Representatives and Municipalities in addition to rights of education and other civilian rights.

Mr. President

When addressing non-discrimination in protection, we must remember Major General pilot martyr, Majid Al Tamimy who died in August 2014 in a plane crash while trying to rescue Yazidis displaced who were trapped in Sinjar Mountain by ISIS. This is just one example which clearly indicates that the Iraqi government treats all Iraqi people on equal foot without discrimination in protection, evacuation and aid distribution in areas affected by ISIS terrorism.

Thank you Mr. President.