

Thank you Madam Chair,

My name is Bashar. I am Syrian. As a Christian in my country, I had always the right to express my religious identity and perform my rituals in harmony with other components of the society. This right has always been promoted in my country, which is something we have always been proud of.

After the war started in 2011, we began feel and witness the crack in the society between its components, which, of course, affects all of us. We, Christians, as an essential part of this society, are concerned with its restoration and the reconciliation. We aspire to live in a harmonious society and even better than the previous one. We dream of the Syria of dialogue and equal participation, the country of Mosaic, this symbolic name that we are famous of.

The restoration of the society starts with education. And education is inseparable from the constitution.

Syrians today are writing a new constitution, and as any other Christian in Syria, I am proud of the Arabic and Islamic components in my identity, they are parts of who I am. I am also cherishing my further and oldest roots, and I aspire to raise awareness of these roots more.

I urge my country to:

- 1. Work on forming a constitution that recognizes the diverse origins of all, and unites them all under the roof of one homeland. A constitution based on the desire to live together on the basis of secularism that respects all religions, not Sharia.**
- 2. Increase awareness of the Christian heritage by teaching Aramaic and Syriac in schools in the regions where the language is still spoken, and to include a branch in the university to teach Syriac language, literature and ancient Aramaic.**
- 3. Faculty teaching democracy and human rights, non-violent communication and reconciliation.**
- 4 - A college teaching interfaith dialogue, which has become important not only at the level of religious leaders, but also at the popular level.**