

Speaker: Thank you Mr. Chairperson. The Josep Irla Foundation is built upon values such as democracy, freedom and the right to self determination of our peoples. In our view, the [inaudible] of these last values has been one of the major sources of oppression, instability and unresolved conflicts in modern times, all over the world. From the two World Wars to many of our own conflicts that afflict our own troubled times the aspiration of great and middling powers to rule over national and linguistic minorities without their full consent has met natural resistance. Sometimes this resistance has been handled through dialog, negotiation, accommodation, and democratic procedures. In most cases though, governments have resorted to authoritarian measures in order to crush what they regard as a threat. In several cases they have even resorted to military means, even invading or attacking other states, in order to impose their view of what is the proper way to handle the fact that we live in a nationally and linguistically diverse world. In our view, the less faith we put in dialog and democratic procedures, in order to meet minorities demands - the more prone the world is to violence and authoritarianism. As justice Brandeis from the U.S. Supreme Court said, and I quote, "No Peace, which is lasting, can ever come until the nations, great and small, accept the democratic principles that there is and shall not be a super nation to rise to the subjection of others and the truth that each people has in it something of peculiar value which it can contribute to the civilization for which we are all striving." End of quote. For all of this, we call on the UN to develop a set of recommendations and good practices on how states could best enable demands for self determination to be channeled democratically. At the same time we call on states to address citizens' demands for self determination and to engage constructively with [inaudible] governments in order to guarantee it. Thank you very much.