

Speaker: Thank you Mr Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen as we commemorate the landmark moment for the universal protection of minority rights we need to come to terms with the fact that the declaration adopted 30 years ago has yet to fulfill its promise for comprehensive and effective protection of minority rights and indeed our human rights. And it's protection is essential to political and social stability as the preamble of the 1992 declaration states. Yet minorities around the world continue to face forced cultural or linguistic assimilation. Its members are often victims of hate speech and remain disproportionately affected by various forms of systemic oppression and group-based discrimination. Democratic backsliding and the rise of authoritarian forms of populism have also negatively impacted minority rights which 30 years ago emerged as distinctive of democracies. Respecting rather than suppressing diversity. Such persistent vulnerabilities are at the roots of enduring conflicts and relate to real gaps of effective implementation. As an professor myself here at the [inaudible] and a member of the board of Omnium Cultural, with approximately 190,000 members with mission of preserving Catalan culture and language I often experience the stark contrast because, sorry, between what I teach to my students and the lack of an effective protection of my own language and identity. Indeed in Catalonia, a stateless nation with a distinctive history, culture and language have been systematically denied or marginalized throughout history or relegated through a second class toward the native constitutional status. Such persistent inequality has increased Democratic support for self-determination as the only means to overcome group-based inequality and enjoy the right of cultural and linguistic identity. Spain has confronted the support through a securitization and criminalization approach that has involved targeting democratic forms of political expression, legitimizing police violence and even massive surveillance with Pegasus spyware of Catalan politicians, lawyers, journalists, and human rights activists and pro independence leaders.