

Speaker: Thank you Mr. Chair. My delegation welcomes the convening of this forum. We believe it is the responsibility of the states to ensure promotion and protection of the rights of their minorities. India is a multicultural, multireligious and multilingual polity with a [inaudible] ethos of pluralism. The constitution of India has guaranteed [inaudible] fundamental rights to all its Indian citizens without any discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Special legal protection for conservation of distinct culture, language and script and other interests of minority communities has also been guaranteed therein. [inaudible] quality, freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights and protection of linguistic minorities are notable provisions in the constitution in this regard. In addition to the protection enshrined in the constitution, specific legislation has also been enacted for the welfare of the minority communities. Religious minorities are free to follow their personal laws in relation to matrimony and other family [inaudible]. The National Commission for Minorities Act, was enacted to constitute a national commission for minorities. The national commission for minority institutions was also established in 2004. The Ministry of Minority Affairs was [inaudible] from social justice and empowerment in 2006 in order to ensure the welfare of the minority communities. Mr. Chair, and the rights guaranteed in the constitution for the welfare of the minorities are violated, the right to constitutional remedies allows the aggrieved citizens or others on their behalf to approach the Supreme Court of India or the [inaudible] directly. In addition, there are various penal laws in India that provide [inaudible] management for discriminating against or victimization of minorities. In conclusion, India remains committed to guarantee all rights to its minorities in line with its commitment under national and international instruments. I thank you Mr. Chair.