

Speaker: Thank you Mr. Chairman. The UNPR is a membership based organization of minorities, indigenous and other politically marginalized groups. All of them are denied equal representation on the national and the international level. As a consequence, the opportunity to participate in an international [inaudible] is limited. And they struggle to fully realize their fundamental rights. The respect of self determination and meaningful participation are two key issues for the protection of minority rights. First, since the establishment of the minority forum in 2008, minorities have been requesting the protection of their right of self determination. This right is a fundamental condition for the enjoyment of other fundamental rights and fundamental freedoms. Be they civil, political, economic, social or cultural. For example, excluded from decision making, minorities have had their lands and resources exploited without their free prior [inaudible] consent. As it is the case with the [inaudible] in Pakistan, the [inaudible] in Laos or the Papoeas in Indonesia. Second, states are also targeting minorities requesting for the right of self determination. At the UN there is a clear pattern of a state [inaudible] and repression tactics against underrepresented people. States are also escalating transnational repression against the diaspora communities, human rights defenders and ethnic minorities engaged in the promotion of these rights. Our recommendations are the following. First, self determination should be embodied, not only in the declaration of the rights of minorities but in a specifically dedicated, legally binding treaty. Second, meaningful and permanent spaces of participation and dialog between minorities and states are urgently needed. Minorities should have their right of participation and diplomacy protected. UN bodies should be opening their doors to a dialog, not closing them. Thank you Mr. Chairman.