



**16th session of the Forum on Minority Issues
30 Novembre – 01 Decembre 2023**

Session 3 – Legal and Structural Approaches to More Inclusive Societies

Dear President,

Sustainable Development and its principles have never materialised in Iran. In particular, the inclusion principle is alien to Iranian discourse and policymaking.

This has impacts on minority nations making up the majority of the population in Iran. They are left vulnerable with their social cohesion being eroded continually and with no protection to participate in socioeconomic spheres. Iranian authorities use assimilation to impose discriminatory and racist policies; and rule by hegemony to marginalise minority nations.

They are increasingly deprived of resources for healthcare, education, and economics, while inequalities are amplified. Iranian surveillance systems constantly monitor Azerbaijanis promoting their identity. Azerbaijani activists are frequently detained. Infiltrators inflict tension and conflict. In 2023, Lake Urmia dried up completely because of policy malpractices. The infiltrators blame the nation of Azerbaijan, but not the government who cut off water to the lake for 2 decades until it dried up. We call the attention of the Special Rapporteur on Minority to focus on the Azerbaijanis in Iran and document their situation, who are increasingly deprived of water, in fear of salt storms, and faced with eroding social cohesion.

Thank you