

Henda Maarfi_ statement_ UNFMI

Minority Rights Group International

Session 1 - Challenges to Inclusion & Equality: barriers in social and economic participation of minorities

Thank you, Mrs. Co-President

On behalf of Minority Rights Group International, we believe that it is necessary to discuss discrimination related to access to education faced by minority and marginalised groups all over the world.

For example, regarding linguistic and religious minorities, a decrease in the number of schools in Tajikistan teaching minority languages has been recorded, as highlighted by the United Nations special rapporteur on minority issues.

In Tunisia, many religious minorities are limited by the obligation to follow Islamic education, which harms their right to freedom of religion.

In India, although positive measures have helped certain groups, school enrolments have fallen for Muslims and scheduled castes and tribes due to social marginalisation and deficiency of infrastructures.

Still on the topic of education, it is important to highlight the intersectional discrimination faced by disabled people. So, in the far South of Thailand, nearly half of the disabled Malay-Muslim children do not have access to education due to a lack of qualified teachers and accessible resources and structures.

About 80% of the 70 million deaf people in the world do not receive any education due to a lack of understanding and recognition of sign languages. In Brazil, for example, the public policies do not guarantee the integration of disabled people into the education system which excludes minorities who belong to the black population, quilombos and the indigenous people, just to name a few.

To tackle these challenges, we appeal to the UN to

1. Adopt intersectional policies, give priority to inclusive education and improve infrastructures for minority and marginalised groups.
2. Collaborate with the Member States to implement solid disintegrated data collection mechanisms focused on monitoring the educational situation of minority communities.
3. Encourage Member States to develop inclusive educational programmes which respect the diversity of minority groups.

Thank you