

Samraa Organisation for Human Development

Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

I stand before you to affirm a truth that Iraq's experience makes clear: a nation's strength lies not in its uniformity, but in its ability to protect and celebrate diversity. For centuries, Iraq has been home to Turkmen, Yazidis, Christians, Assyrians, Kurds, and many other communities that have shaped our history and enriched our identity. Yet today, over 1.2 million Iraqis remain internally displaced. Despite constitutional guarantees, many still face exclusion, discrimination, and threats to their cultural survival. But Iraq's diversity has not been erased. It has endured, and within that endurance lies a lesson for global governance. Minorities are not merely recipients of protection, they are essential partners in building peaceful and resilient societies. Their inclusion is not charity, but a prerequisite for stability. Consultations with 150 minority representatives across Iraq underscored a simple truth: trust requires truth and unity requires recognition. Communities spoke of education systems that omit their histories, of institutions that failed to protect their rights, and of political processes that sidelined their voices. Yet these same communities of women and men alike have led reconciliation, documented atrocities, and rebuilt neighborhoods devastated by war. From Iraq's experience, 5 lessons emerge: first, representation must come with accountability. Quotas alone are insufficient without transparency and independent institutions. Second is that education shapes belonging. Inclusive curriculum builds respect and cohesion. Third is that decentralization builds trust by empowering local administrations to address inclusion and resource distribution. Fourth, intersectionality matters. Minority women and youth face multiple barriers that must be addressed. Finally, reconciliation requires recognition. Iraq's ongoing Yazidi reparations initiative shows the importance of survivor-centered justice, including the important preservation of languages in accordance with the 2030 agenda. I close with this message: peace is not achieved by erasing difference, but by safeguarding it. Thank you.