



*Permanent Mission of Italy to the
International Organizations in Geneva*

Forum on Minority Issues
Tenth Session

Item 5: Minority youth: agents of change for peace and stability

Statement of Italy
1 December 2017

Thank you, Mr Chairman

- Italy is strongly committed to the protection and promotion of the rights of religious, ethnic and linguistic minorities and we consider very appropriate the choice to develop, during this Forum, the issue of minority youth. Young people belonging to minorities need a targeted and strengthened protection from States, as they have a fundamental role to play in the preservation of their communities and, more generally, for the maintenance of the cohesion and stability of the entire society. They are particularly vulnerable as they may suffer multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and may face the risk of radicalization. At the Taormina G7 Summit, last May, Italy encouraged partners to pay more attention to the responsiveness of the most vulnerable groups to the call of extremists.
- It is also important for States to strengthen the involvement of youth minority in the society in which they live, also at the political and economic level, encouraging and stimulating active participation in decision-making processes, as well as in initiatives related to peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Youth must be the privileged interlocutors of our political and cultural action to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue.
- Last July, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized together with the Italian Institute for International Political Studies ISPI a conference on the protection of religious communities and the opportunity to invest in young people as the major players of a new season of rapprochement, dialogue and peaceful coexistence among peoples. The event highlighted the importance of bringing younger generations closer to the culture of tolerance, dialogue and diversity also in relation to confessional choices.
- Italy has been the first State to financially contribute to the Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake. The Special Envoy plays a key role in the promotion of youth participation in the UN work and activities, engaging young people in the present and future challenges that we face.

In the panelists' views, how could minority youth involvement be supported by the United Nations and its mechanisms? Thank you.