

## **Human Rights Council**

**13<sup>th</sup> Session, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

### **Item 3: Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights including the Right to Development**

#### **Statement by Minority Rights Group International**

Thank you Mr. President. I speak on behalf of Minority Rights Group International.

We warmly welcome the valuable report of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Ms Gay McDougall and thank her for her excellent work and commitment to minority rights.

In particular MRG welcomes the report and recommendations of the second Forum on Minority Issues. As the Independent Expert highlights in her report, the right to effective participation is a fundamental human right protected by international instruments and for minorities is essential for an inclusive and just society. MRG is particularly encouraged by the level of interest and engagement in the forum by all actors – States, UN agencies, and NGOs – and we urge that all continue this engagement through ensuring effective implementation of the recommendations.

The report discussed a regional follow up event to the first session of the Forum along with follow up with the UN treaty bodies. MRG calls for adequate resources to be made available for similar events to be held in other regions and would like to know what plans the Independent Expert has for follow up of the recommendations from the second session?

MRG welcomes the Independent Expert's engagement with UN specialized agencies to enhance their implementation of Article 9 of the UN Declaration on Minorities<sup>1</sup>, and specifically the work with UNICEF discussed in the report. MRG urges UNICEF and other UN agencies to develop in conjunction with the Independent Expert, a comprehensive policy on minorities to guide their work.

MRG also welcomes the continuous attention given by the Independent Expert to the situation of minority women and girls and her strong support for new and emerging initiatives to combat discrimination, such as the draft UN principles and guidelines for the elimination of discrimination based on work and descent.

Finally, MRG reiterates that the mandate of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues is vitally important to some of the most marginalized communities around the world and we thank her for her excellent work.

Thank you Mr. President.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 9 states "The specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system shall contribute to the full realization of the rights and principles set forth in the present Declaration, within their respective fields of competence."