

**Human Rights Council****Fifty-second session**

27 February–31 March 2023

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development****Strengthening and mainstreaming the protection of the rights
of minorities at the United Nations: an assessment of the
implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons
Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic
Minorities******Report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Fernand de
Varenes***Summary*

In the present report, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Fernand de Varenes, provides an overview of his activities since his previous report (A/HRC/49/46) and the activities marking the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. It also contains a thematic report on moving forward in recognizing and protecting the rights of minorities at the United Nations, in which the Special Rapporteur critically reviews and assesses the implementation of the Declaration since its adoption. Echoing the observations of the Secretary-General, António Guterres – “that – thirty years on – the world is falling short. Far short. We are not dealing with gaps – we are dealing with outright inaction and negligence in the protection of minority rights” – the Special Rapporteur points to little or no significant development institutionally at the United Nations to advance the protection of minorities when compared with other marginalized groups. He describes the widespread views expressed by most minority rights activists and representatives of the urgent need to mainstream the protection of the rights of minorities at the United Nations and further develop mechanisms to better ensure the protection of minority rights as has increasingly been the case for other marginalized groups. Among the recommendations that were widely supported during the Special Rapporteur’s regional forums, and at the Forum on Minority Issues, are proposals for States to begin work on a legally binding instrument, the consolidation of regional forums on minorities at the United Nations and, among others, the creation of a permanent forum and voluntary fund for minorities at the United Nations.

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I. Introduction

1. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues was established by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 2005/79 of 21 April 2005, and subsequently extended by the Human Rights Council in successive resolutions.
2. The current Special Rapporteur, Fernand de Varennes, was appointed by the Human Rights Council in June 2017, and assumed his functions on 1 August 2017. The mandate was extended in 2020 for a three-year period by the Council in its resolution 43/8.
3. The Special Rapporteur is honoured to be entrusted with the mandate and thanks the Human Rights Council for its trust in him. He also wishes to thank the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for its support in the implementation of the mandate.

II. Activities of the Special Rapporteur

4. The Special Rapporteur wishes to draw the attention of the Human Rights Council to the mandate's web page, where general information is provided on the activities associated with the mandate, including communications, press statements, public appearances, country visits and thematic reports.¹ An overview of the activities of the mandate holder between 1 January and 1 July 2022 is provided in the report presented to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session.²

5. The Special Rapporteur has continued to focus on increasing the visibility and raising awareness of minority issues – particularly related to his thematic priorities (statelessness; education, language and the human rights of minorities; hate speech targeting minorities in social media; and the prevention of ethnic conflicts) – among United Nations institutions and Member States, and more generally among the general public and other regional and international organizations. He has also focused on new approaches in order to improve the accessibility of activities under the mandate such as the Forum on Minority Issues and on the gaps in efforts to better protect the rights of minorities in the institutions, structures and initiatives of the United Nations.

6. This work has included three main initiatives:

(a) Consolidating, in cooperation with the Tom Lantos Institute and numerous regional minority and human rights organizations, the continued organization of regional forums each year on the same themes as the Forum on Minority Issues. This has led, since 2019, to the organization of 13 regional forums on minority issues held in Africa, the Middle East, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, with more than 1,600 participants;

(b) Clarifying, for the purposes of the mandate, a working definition of the concept of a minority, and the significance and scope of the four categories of minorities recognized in United Nations instruments (national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities);

(c) Holding a high-level General Assembly event to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities during the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly in New York, and a series of associated activities.

A. Country visit

7. The Special Rapporteur looks forward to continuing dialogue with Cameroon, India, Jordan, Kenya, Nepal, the Russian Federation, South Africa, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu, to which he has made requests to visit.

¹ See www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/SRMinorities/Pages/SRminorityissuesIndex.aspx.

² [A/77/246](#).

8. In his visits, the Special Rapporteur focuses on the importance of addressing discrimination, exclusion and other violations of human rights involving particularly marginalized minorities, such as the Dalits, Hazara, Rohingya and Roma, and doubly or even triply marginalized minority women, and issues pertaining to deaf and hard-of-hearing persons who, as users of sign language, are members of linguistic minorities.

9. The Special Rapporteur conducted an official visit to Paraguay from 14 to 25 November 2022 at the invitation of the Government. The country visit report will be submitted to the Human Rights Council in 2024. The Special Rapporteur will be conducting an official visit to Costa Rica in May 2023.

B. Communications

10. The Special Rapporteur sent communications and urgent action letters to the Member States concerned based on information received from diverse sources about human rights violations perpetrated against national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. Those communications and the responses thereto are publicly available.

11. In 2022, a total of 70 communications were sent by the Special Rapporteur. Of those, 64 were letters of allegation and 6 were letters commenting on and raising concerns over specific legislation, policies and practices. All of them were sent jointly with other special procedure mandate holders, with 11 led by the Special Rapporteur.

12. With regard to the geographical distribution of the communications, they were sent to States in Africa (3), Asia and the Pacific (36), Eastern Europe (4), Western Europe (17), Latin America and the Caribbean (2) and others (8).

C. Conferences and awareness-raising activities

13. Raising awareness and increasing the visibility of the human rights of minorities has been repeatedly highlighted as an important dimension of the Special Rapporteur's work since his appointment by the Human Rights Council in June 2017. Accordingly, the Special Rapporteur has frequently participated in and contributed to conferences, seminars and meetings at the international, regional and national levels throughout the world and with a variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations. He has also given frequent media interviews on issues involving the human rights of minorities.

14. In 2022, the Special Rapporteur participated as a keynote or guest speaker and panellist in almost 80 events, including webinars or in-person conferences, such as the opening of the high-level event on the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities at the General Assembly in New York on 21 September 2022; the third round table with technology and social media companies on addressing and countering hate speech; the Twenty-second Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons (established by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)) in Vienna; the thirtieth anniversary of the dispute settlement to South Tyrol between Austria and Italy in Bolzano, Italy; the Times of Crisis Pillar Summit of the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, in Costa Rica; the annual meeting of the Federalist Union of European Nationalities; the high-level celebratory event of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the launch of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages; the analysis workshop organized by Conciliation Resources and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation on mediating self-determination conflicts; the tenth anniversary of the Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies organized by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities; the OSCE-wide event on countering hate speech, in Vienna; the regional conference on the role of religious leaders and actors in countering hate speech organized by the OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, in Beirut; the meeting on persecution in India, organized by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Prevention of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; the Atlantic Council-Human Rights Watch side event in New York on the situation in the Xinjiang Uighur

Autonomous Region; the Forum on the Participation of NGOs in the Ordinary Sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in the Gambia; the conference on stopping the diminishing linguistic diversity in Europe and on promoting the rights of national and linguistic minorities organized by the European Parliament's Intergroup on Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages; and the international stocktaking round table on Roma and memorialization: advancing recognition and remedy for the dark chapters of the past and their impact on the present.

15. He also contributed to other initiatives in his capacity as Special Rapporteur such as, at the invitation of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, adding to the revision of the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes and helping to draft new guidelines on the social and economic participation of national minorities for the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

III. Thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

16. The President of the General Assembly, Csaba Körösi, opened a high-level meeting to mark the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on 21 September 2022.

17. It was the first-ever such high-level event since the adoption of the Declaration 30 years ago, however, the tone was less than celebratory with the Secretary-General, António Guterres, observing "that – thirty years on – the world is falling short. Far short. We are not dealing with gaps – we are dealing with outright inaction and negligence in the protection of minority rights", and Ilze Brands-Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, saying that after 30 years, the commitment laid out in the Declaration remains unfulfilled and that "Member State and multilateral action is urgently needed to raise the priority of minority rights on the global agenda" with the United Nations system itself needing to step up and promise joint action across the entire Organization.

18. For his part, the Special Rapporteur noted that there had been little or no significant development institutionally at the United Nations to advance the protection of minorities when compared with other marginalized groups, with widespread views expressed by most minority rights activists and representatives of the urgent need to mainstream the protection of the rights of minorities at the United Nations and further develop initiatives and mechanisms to better ensure the protection of minority rights as had increasingly been the case for other marginalized groups.

IV. Update on the Forum on Minority Issues and regional forums on minority issues

19. In his 2018 report to the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur identified the need for a regional approach to complement the Forum on Minority Issues in order to make the Forum more accessible to minorities in different parts of the world and more receptive to regional concerns and contexts,³ and broaden the participation of minorities, experts, States and international organizations in the principal review mechanism of the Declaration, namely the Forum. Participation is geared towards the drafting of regional recommendations on select minority rights discussed annually by the Forum. These regional recommendations also serve to inform the work of the Special Rapporteur, as well as of the Forum in Geneva.

20. The first steps towards implementing such an approach were taken in 2019, when three regional forums were held. The uncertainties in 2020 owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic resulted in holding only two out of the four regional forums envisaged on the thematic priority of tackling hate speech and incitement to hatred against persons belonging to minorities through social media. Four regional forums were held in

³ [A/HRC/37/66](#), para. 64.

2021 and 2022 for the Americas, Africa and the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia. In total, 13 regional forums have been held since 2019 with 1,617 participants and 676 recommendations dealing with issues such as minority language rights (2019), hate speech (2020), conflict prevention (2021) and the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration (2022).

21. The regional forums were possible thanks to the coordination of the Tom Lantos Institute and the contributions and assistance of numerous non-governmental organizations, State representatives, and regional and international organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the European Union, OSCE, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and others.

22. The Forum itself was established in 2007 by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 6/15 and the important role of the Forum reaffirmed in 2012 in Council resolution 19/23. The Forum is mandated to provide a platform for promoting dialogue and cooperation on issues pertaining to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, and to provide thematic contributions and expertise to the work of the Special Rapporteur. The Special Rapporteur is tasked with guiding the work of the Forum, preparing its annual sessions and reporting to the Council on the Forum's thematic recommendations. The Forum meets annually in Geneva for two working days, which are allocated to thematic discussions. In recent years, before the pandemic, the Forum was usually attended by more than 600 participants, although that number decreased to approximately 400 in 2020 and 2021, with a hybrid format because of the pandemic.

23. In 2022, however, the fifteenth session of the Forum returned to an in-person format on 1 and 2 December, with participants unable to attend in Geneva having the option of presenting a video intervention. The number of registered participants in 2022 surged to almost pre-COVID-19 levels with 580 participants from 79 countries, an indication of the high level of interest in the Forum itself and the importance of addressing minority issues. The theme in 2022 was, as for the regional forums, the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration: review, rethink, reform.

24. The complete report on the Forum and its recommendations is being presented to the Human Rights Council separately.

V. Thematic report: moving forward in recognizing and protecting the rights of minorities at the United Nations

A. Introduction

25. In 1992, the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities was adopted in response to the reconfiguration of the international order following the end of the Cold War, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and an upsurge in violent conflicts in different parts of the world, in which minority issues often figured prominently. This was during the period that led to the adoption of global and regional instruments and treaties such as the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the creation of the mandate of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in 1992 as a conflict prevention tool, and in 1993 the adoption of the Copenhagen criteria for countries wishing to join the European Union, which included "stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities". The fate of minorities was at stake 30 years ago, echoing earlier calls made by the United Nations in 1948. It is important to remember that the atrocities committed during the Second World War, against Jewish, Roma and other minorities, which led to the adoption of the first United Nations human rights treaty – on genocide – and the instrumentalization of some minority grievances being used as pretexts for aggression early in the global conflict

were still fresh in people's minds when the General Assembly first adopted a resolution on this issue of global concern.⁴

26. There were high hopes 30 years ago for steady implementation of the rights of minorities, of their human rights, which would effect a major shift in the lives of many communities and millions of people around the world. The protection of minority rights was seen as vital to conflict prevention, the achievement of sustainable development and the fulfilment of human rights, as the President of the General Assembly recognized in his remarks at the high-level event commemorating the adoption of the Declaration.⁵ The Secretary-General also emphasized that minority rights were human rights, that the protection of minorities was integral to the United Nation's mission and that promotion of those rights was vital to advancing political and social stability and preventing conflict.

27. The verdict from the Secretary-General on 21 September 2022 was not optimistic when he concluded that "thirty years on – the world is falling short. Far short. We are not dealing with gaps – we are dealing with outright inaction and negligence in the protection of minority rights". The Special Rapporteur also painted a rather dark picture of surging conflicts involving minorities, of disproportionate and increasing levels of hate speech, racist and prejudiced hate speech in social media and hate crimes and attacks fuelled by growing intolerance targeting national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, or growing restrictions on their human rights, including in the use of minority languages in education, and restrictions on the rights of religious minorities, and even increasing numbers of stateless persons in the world – overwhelmingly so because some States exclude particular minority groups from citizenship.

28. Some 30 years later, the question therefore remains how and to which extent, or even whether, the recognition and protection of the rights of minorities at the United Nations have moved forward.

B. The recognition and protection of the rights of minorities at the United Nations: a less than glowing record

29. In its resolution of 1948, the General Assembly had clearly indicated that the United Nations could not remain indifferent to the fate of minorities and that it would need to take effective measures for the protection of racial, national, religious or linguistic minorities.

30. An outside observer could be forgiven for concluding that the United Nations has remained largely indifferent: no treaty on the rights of minorities was ever adopted after the creation of the United Nations, while from the 1950s onwards the international community embarked on an extensive period of standard-setting for human rights in international law, as shown chronologically by the following treaties: Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1951); Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951); Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952); Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954); Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1956); Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973); Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143); Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984); Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990); and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

⁴ In 1948, the General Assembly declared in a resolution that the United Nations could not "remain indifferent to the fate of minorities" and that it would need "to take effective measures for the protection of racial, national, religious or linguistic minorities". See General Assembly resolution 217 (III) C of 10 December 1948.

⁵ See <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1s/k1sd1c79hy>.

31. The list of international binding instruments covers a significant number of marginalized groups: persons with disabilities, migrant workers, children, women and stateless persons, in particular. Others are of course missing, such as Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, but it is noteworthy that minorities were explicitly and early on identified, in 1948, by the General Assembly as a particular group that needed to be the subject of “effective measures” for their protection in a resolution soon after the creation of the United Nations, whereas Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent only came to be considered directly much later in the Organization’s history.

32. The Declaration was – perhaps – to be a new start, in part an acknowledgment of the urgency for the United Nations to deal with what had already been deemed, in 1948, as the “fate of minorities” and to take effective measures for their protection, contributing to the quelling of the upsurge of violent conflicts and instability and the instrumentalization of minority grievances in a significant number of these conflicts.⁶ The Declaration itself was, after all, more of an “unfinished story” and a new start rather than a comprehensive set of protective measures, which were initially envisioned in 1948.

33. Briefly, and at the risk of oversimplification, there have only been six effective institutional measures instituted by the United Nations in the 30 years since the adoption of the Declaration: the creation of the Working Group on Minorities in 1993, replaced in 2007 by the Forum on Minority Issues; the Special Rapporteur on minority issues (first established in 2005 as an Independent Expert); the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities established in 2012; the 2013 training programme for human rights and minority rights defenders of the Minorities Fellowship Programme;⁷ and, finally, the 2013 Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (which was largely ignored and forgotten, at least in relation to its minority protection mandate).⁸ A special mention ought to be made, however, of the OHCHR-initiated 2012 Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, which lays out religious leaders’ core responsibilities in countering incitement to hatred, and the subsequent 2017 Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights, which expands those responsibilities to the full spectrum of human rights and which led to the #Faith4Rights toolkit of 2019, containing 18 commitments to “reach out to people of different religions and beliefs in all regions of the world, to promote a common, action-oriented platform”.⁹ The toolkit’s training modules make frequent references to and include strategies aimed at nurturing tolerance and inclusion of religious minorities and protecting their rights.¹⁰

34. The Special Rapporteur has noted that the first 20 years after the adoption of the Declaration represented something of a high point in the acknowledgment and integration of

⁶ The extent to which the Declaration and many initial measures to address the protection of minorities were closely connected to conflict prevention is insufficiently acknowledged. The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities invited, in 1990, its Norwegian expert member, Asbjørn Eide, to carry out a study on possible ways and means of facilitating the peaceful and constructive solution of problems involving minorities (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/34), which itself led to the establishment of the Working Group on Minorities and eventually to the creation of the Forum on Minority Issues.

⁷ The Minorities Fellowship Programme, established in 2005, is often described as one of the shining stars of the commitments of OHCHR towards ensuring the protection of minorities. It is one of three similar programmes, the other two being: the fellowship programme for people of African descent, which started in 2011; and the earlier Indigenous Fellowship Programme, which began in 1997. The Indigenous Fellowship Programme did not operate in 2022 because of the pandemic. For its part, the Minorities Fellowship Programme has – rather surprisingly and disturbingly – not been offered since 2019.

⁸ One noteworthy, and in some ways almost unique, publication that merits an honourable mention is: United Nations Development Programme, *Marginalised Minorities in Development Programming: A UNDP Resource Guide and Toolkit* (New York, 2010), produced in partnership with the Independent Expert on minority issues and OHCHR.

⁹ See www.ohchr.org/en/faith-for-rights/faith4rights-toolkit.

¹⁰ Module 6 on minority rights. See www.ohchr.org/en/faith-for-rights/faith4rights-toolkit/module-6-minority-rights.

the rights of minorities at the United Nations,¹¹ including, perhaps especially, the 2013 Guidance Note of the Secretary-General, in which he called for the mainstreaming of minority rights across all pillars and activities of the United Nations and the integration of anti-discrimination and minority rights into the work of the United Nations system at the global, regional and country levels, including through coordination mechanisms. While these and other initiatives were significant and noteworthy at the time, they pale in comparison to developments for other marginalized groups.

35. The record more recently for minorities has not been one of progress, quite the opposite. As the Special Rapporteur points out, in his thematic report on protection of the rights of minorities in the institutions, structures and initiatives of the United Nations, institutionally, the United Nations embraced the need to focus on specific groups and their human rights by designating specific days, weeks, years and decades as occasions to mark events or topics in order to promote the objectives of the Organization, including human rights. Decades or years that have sought the promotion of the human rights of particularly vulnerable or marginalized groups have become commonplace except for one such group, that of minorities.¹²

36. Ironically, while the adoption of the Declaration was directly and intimately linked to the recognition of the centrality of minority protection in many of the world's conflicts in the late 1980s and 1990s, the focus and expertise at the United Nations on this core issue has not followed suit: among other issues, the Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers does not include a professional staff member with comprehensive expertise on minority rights. While the Team has undoubtedly addressed questions of minority rights in its work, there remains no formally designated focal point in this field. Furthermore, there is no mention of the human rights of minorities in its 2022 factsheet or its open call for applications for 2023, despite most conflicts worldwide involving minority grievances or the instrumentalization of minority claims. Even the main document of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs providing an overview of the approach of the United Nations to conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy makes no reference to minorities.¹³

37. One of the few noteworthy initiatives after the adoption of the Declaration, and one full of promise, was the 2013 Guidance Note of the Secretary-General, which was developed within the framework of the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities during the twentieth anniversary year of the Declaration in 2012 and which sets out guiding principles and a framework for United Nations action with a view to ensuring a comprehensive and coherent United Nations approach from Headquarters to regional and country presences. These were far-ranging and worthy of being highlighted:

- (a) Integrate anti-discrimination and minority rights into the work of the United Nations system at global, regional and country level, including through coordination mechanisms;
- (b) Pursue a human rights-based approach in all United Nations activities;
- (c) Apply a gender perspective in all analysis and actions and address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination;
- (d) Promote diversity among United Nations staff, including through diversity action plans;
- (e) Conduct human rights training initiatives for United Nations staff and others to build knowledge on racial discrimination and protection of minorities and ensure that relevant United Nations training materials address these issues;
- (f) Focus on the minorities that are economically, politically and/or socially most marginalized and whose rights are particularly at risk;

¹¹ [A/77/246](#), para. 51.

¹² *Ibid.*, para. 43.

¹³ *Ibid.*, para. 63.

(g) Build wide local ownership through proactive, constructive and early dialogue that includes minorities in areas ranging from development efforts and humanitarian assistance to peacekeeping and peacebuilding;

(h) Pursue evidence-based actions and policies in fields ranging from conflict prevention to development, including through mapping of different dimensions of exclusion and by supporting data collection related to minorities, including in population censuses;

(i) Conduct outreach campaigns and capacity-building activities to promote the rights of persons belonging to minorities and strengthen advocacy against racial discrimination;

(j) Engage and cooperate with United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms dealing with racial discrimination and minority rights, including by supporting follow-up to recommendations and by facilitating participation of minorities in these processes;

(k) Combat institutional racism and systemic discrimination by supporting reforms that advance minority participation and full equality in law enforcement, employment and other key fields;

(l) Encourage constructive management of diversity to address identity-based tensions, including culturally attuned preventive measures focusing on the most important risk factors;

(m) Support efforts to protect languages and other elements of identities of minorities in a manner that enables intercultural, inter-ethnic and interreligious dialogue;

(n) Support the inclusion of strong anti-discrimination and other minority rights guarantees in constitutions and other legislation as well as effective mechanisms for their implementation;

(o) Promote inclusive dialogue and participation of minorities in decision-making and political processes, including in peace negotiations, transitional justice processes, environmental decision-making, electoral processes and in constitution-making, and provide capacity-building support;

(p) Support crime prevention efforts, including measures such as socioeconomic integration of minorities and special protection for those most vulnerable to crime;

(q) Support efforts to ensure equal access to the media, including targeted programmes for media outlets servicing minorities, and measures to combat hate speech;

(r) Reinforce rights-based education curricula that include bilingual or mother-tongue education, support pluralism and diversity and expand knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of minorities;

(s) Support efforts to ensure that national human rights institutions and specialized bodies have the resources, competency and capacity to combat racial discrimination and address minority rights in an effective manner.

38. Human rights-based approaches, gender perspectives and initiatives to combat racial discrimination have been mainstreamed in United Nations institutions and activities. Initiatives to combat racial discrimination, for example, have, for decades, been a major area of focus institutionally and have taken the shape of numerous steps and initiatives – including through the first Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1973–1982), which became the framework for initiatives at the United Nations, leading also to the first World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, with an accompanying programme of action, in 1978 – to promote implementation of the international legal instruments tackling racism and racial discrimination. A second conference took place in 1983. Central to United Nations work and involvement in combating racial discrimination has, of course, been the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban Conference), resulting in the Declaration and Programme of Action, which are considered as a historic, near-universal consensus on a blueprint for implementing human rights commitments in pursuit of the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination,

xenophobia and related intolerance. Other developments along the same lines have included the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024), the agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality, not to mention the United Nations mechanisms, permanent forums and voluntary funds for combating racism and racial discrimination, the permanent forums for people of African descent, the specific treaty on the elimination of racial discrimination and so on. The Durban Declaration and Plan of Action, in particular, have, since 1997, served as a road map for action at the United Nations, helped expand the scope of the United Nations agenda with its recommendations on how to combat racial discrimination and led to coordination with affected communities, as well as to collecting data on these.

39. However, no comparable progress or initiatives materialized for minorities, contrary to what could have been expected from the guiding principles and a framework for United Nations action in the Guidance Note of the Secretary-General. Indeed, a point often raised by minority civil society organizations during the regional forums on minorities and the Forum on Minority Issues is that there may have been regression in terms of the recognition of minority rights issues, including in the United Nations itself.

40. In recent years, the Special Rapporteur has noted that the term “minority” has been expunged from earlier versions of important United Nations initiatives. While paragraph 23 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development specifies vulnerable persons who should be empowered by the Agenda, the term “minorities” was intentionally removed from the earlier versions of the enumeration of “those left behind” without any explanation, while all the others remained.¹⁴ In the recently adopted road map for the next decade on the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights there are mentions, on numerous occasions, of those who may be at heightened risk of vulnerability, such as women; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons; children; persons with disabilities; Indigenous Peoples; people of African descent; migrants; and refugee workers. Minorities are never mentioned. Nor again is this an omission: minorities were referred to in earlier drafts and removed, while tellingly new marginalized groups were included in later drafts.¹⁵ These are, unfortunately, not the only cases of the term “minorities” being expunged from earlier United Nations documents or initiatives for marginalized groups.

41. The barriers facing minorities appear to extend at times to the voices and presence of civil society and institutional support at the United Nations to facilitate the central role these now play in the Organization. Calls, first made in 2003, to establish a voluntary fund on minority-related activities at the United Nations have never been heeded,¹⁶ nor have those for the proclamation of an international year or decade for the world’s minorities.¹⁷ This would perhaps be less problematic if the same obstacles for other marginalized groups occurred more broadly in the United Nations, but again the opposite seems to have occurred: minorities as a marginalized group seem to have been held back, while voluntary funds have been established for others (Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, children, slavery, the Fund for Gender Equality, the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women etc.), even when the initial proposals for these funds came later than those for minorities.

42. In short, minorities are the last major group at the United Nations with no specific mechanism or initiative to strengthen the discussion and protection of their human rights, such as a permanent forum or a voluntary fund.

43. Some observers have expressed the view that, institutionally, the United Nations may not have moved forward because of the reluctance or even outright hostility of some key and powerful Member States towards tackling minority issues, including the assertion of human

¹⁴ A/76/162, para. 33.

¹⁵ A/77/246, para. 68.

¹⁶ There is, however, the Special Fund for the Participation of Civil Society in the Social Forum, the Forum on Minority Issues and the Forum on Business and Human Rights.

¹⁷ E/CN.4/2004/2, p. 16.

rights for minorities.¹⁸ It is perhaps no coincidence that, until late in 2022, the civil society organization that was denied consultative status with the Economic and Social Council for the longest period – 14 years – was the International Dalit Solidarity Network, a minority non-governmental organization.

44. Contributions in response to the call for submissions for the present thematic report received by the Special Rapporteur and the discussions and views expressed in regional forums on minority issues in 2022 seem to confirm the concerns of many minorities that, in the absence of effective measures for their protection, some States are able to oppose further progress on minority issues at the United Nations. The former High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, stepped down without seeking to extend her term for a second mandate when it ended in late August 2022; some felt because of how minority issues were being dealt with. On the one hand, following her visit to the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, the High Commissioner, and the statement she issued at the end of the visit, were criticized by human rights activists for failing to condemn more forcefully the incarceration of perhaps one million persons belonging mainly to the region's Uighur and Muslim minorities and other grave allegations of human rights violations. Also a target of criticism was the long delay in releasing her office's more general assessment of the human rights situation in the region¹⁹ – a report that the High Commissioner only released minutes before stepping down. On the other hand, comments received by the Special Rapporteur suggested that the refusal to release the report by OHCHR on Xinjiang, which was much more critical and detailed than the statement, until minutes before the High Commissioner stepped down was clear evidence of how a powerful State could silence even United Nations institutions, in the absence of more robust measures for the protection of minorities.

45. Some 30 years after the adoption of the Declaration and 75 years after the General Assembly affirmed in a resolution that the United Nations could not remain indifferent to the fate of minorities and needed to take effective measures for their protection, the Organization seems to remain indifferent and the effective measures have never materialized: many of the United Nations institutions seem indifferent to minority issues, with minorities remaining largely “left behind” at the Organization when one considers the various initiatives and measures in place institutionally: no treaty, no permanent forum,²⁰ no voluntary fund,²¹ no international decade or year, no mainstreaming of their human rights, no or little reference to them when they are the most affected or marginalized, and so on.

46. The phrase “nature abhors a vacuum” might best describe the current situation. While the human rights architecture can still respond – if somewhat timidly – some States appear resistant to any focus on minorities. The reasons for such sensitivity may be to avoid scrutiny of their own treatment of minorities, or because they view minority concerns as purely internal and sensitive matters, or even because they still hold the view that minorities are a problem that should not be an issue of attention outside of a State's own borders. Whatever the reasons, the vacuum created at the United Nations by not focusing more on this group and adopting further measures for the effective protection of their rights, as the Organization has been doing for other marginalized groups, allows States to “fill in” the gap and to more easily ignore or even instrumentalize minority issues.

47. As minorities have no platform such as a permanent forum – and only the rather meagre two-day Forum on Minority Issues, held in Geneva once a year, any specific treaty mechanisms or financial support through a voluntary fund, or other institutional structures, as do other marginalized groups, they are largely invisible and inaudible at the United Nations. Indeed, even the meagre measures in place seem “second class” when compared

¹⁸ John Packer and Erik Friberg, “Genocide and minorities: preventing the preventable” (London, Minority Rights Group International, 2004), p. 1: “[Some States] believe that implementing the rights of persons belonging to minorities may fuel conflicts, and that the best way to maintain unity is to suppress minority identities, limit their participation and hope their voices will fade as they are absorbed or overwhelmed by the majority.”

¹⁹ See <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/2022-08-31/22-08-31-final-assessment.pdf>.

²⁰ [A/77/246](#), para. 61.

²¹ *Ibid.*, para. 54.

with others; with the Forum on Minority Issues not having seen any significant budgetary increases, meaning, today, that there are not enough financial resources to cover the travel costs for the expert panellists whom should be invited to attend. Even one of the few more recent and promising measures to better recognize and protect minorities, and hear their voices, and more accessible platforms to raise their concerns and offer constructive solutions, namely the organization of regional forums on minorities for the Americas, Africa and the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia, is not a permanent fixture at the United Nations or even a formal activity of the Organization, but was initiated by the Special Rapporteur as an independent expert and has been made possible because of civil society support, such as that from the Tom Lantos Institute. The United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities was itself moribund without holding any meetings for years until 2019.²² Even the shining star of OHCHR, the Minorities Fellowship Programme, has not resumed yearly in-person training since 2020.

48. Finally, there remains too many examples of United Nations institutions not responding promptly or effectively to some of the worst human rights and humanitarian crises until much too late, particularly when it comes to minorities, such as in the responses to the mass incarceration of members of the Uighur and Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, the genocides and crimes against humanity in Rwanda committed against the Tutsi minority and in Bosnia and Herzegovina against the Muslim minority, the massive denial of citizenship rights for more than a million persons belonging to the Rohingya minority, and subsequent refugee and displacement crises, to the more recent situation of millions from the Muslim minority being at risk of becoming stateless in India and the situation of forced assimilation that seems to be involved when as many as one million children of the Tibetan minority in China are separated from their families to be sent to residential schools and denied their religious, linguistic and cultural rights.

49. Whereas the protection of minorities was presented as a priority at the United Nations in 1948 and subsequently as a significant area to develop, and despite the adoption 30 years ago of the Declaration and the subsequent issuance of the 2013 Guidance Note of the Secretary-General, most comments from civil society received by the Special Rapporteur reflected the view that the actual institutional measures for the protection of minorities have not materialized, whereas the protection afforded to other groups has been significant. They rather confirm the Secretary-General's own view expressed in September 2022 that "we are dealing with outright inaction and negligence in the protection of minority rights".

50. Needless to say, this is particularly troubling in a context in which globally there appears to be a growing hostility against minorities, and subsequent denial of their rights, as seen in the rise of online and offline hate speech and hate crimes overwhelmingly targeting minorities,²³ the record-level increases in the number of stateless persons worldwide, with more than 75 per cent of them being persons targeted because they belong to specific minorities,²⁴ the troubling and increasing restrictions on the identity of minorities in relation to education in their own languages,²⁵ and the growing number of conflicts involving minorities with grievances related to exclusion and discrimination, or situations in which minority issues are instrumentalized²⁶ to the point at which there are now more conflicts than at any other time since the adoption 30 years ago of the Declaration – and the subsequent atrocities, even crimes against humanity, and humanitarian crises.

51. Nevertheless, and perhaps counterintuitively, what was eminently apparent in the processes and consultations occurring in 2022 within the frameworks of the Forum on Minority Issues and the four regional forums, as well as the call for submissions for the present thematic report, was not despair – despite the despondency in an admittedly not particularly favourable global context – but the overall desire of minorities and human rights and civil society organizations to move forward and do more and better – including at the United Nations.

²² [A/77/246](#), para. 56.

²³ [A/HRC/46/57](#).

²⁴ [A/73/205](#).

²⁵ [A/HRC/43/47](#).

²⁶ [A/HRC/49/46](#).

C. Review, rethink, reform: the calls to move forward

52. As the saying goes, it is in the darkest moments that we must focus to see the light. This is true in the sense perhaps that the Declaration was at the outset an incomplete story, since it did not represent the culmination of efforts to protect the human rights of minorities and prevent violent conflicts, but was rather a first step towards further developments.

53. It is also true in that, while minorities as a marginalized group may have lagged behind in the mainstreaming of their rights and their integration in the work of the United Nations since the adoption of the Declaration, minorities themselves and their organizations – and a significant number of States – seem to be focusing on the light, as shown by their increasingly visible expression of wanting to engage and be heard and seen at the United Nations, clearly and constructively calling for steps to move forward in implementing the promises and hopes of the Declaration, to better protect and reflect the central role of their human rights in so many areas of concern for the international community, such as hate speech, statelessness, the prevention of conflicts and genocide, and many others. It is also noteworthy that civil society organizations and other entities outside the United Nations have actively developed new areas of research on the protection of the rights of minorities (the Institute for Minority Rights at the European Academy of Bolzano), conflict prevention and minorities (including, the Åland Islands Peace Institute, the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination and the Center for Autonomy Experience at the European Academy of Bolzano) and taken up the challenges linked to combating growing hate speech targeting minorities and other grave and growing violations of their human rights, such as statelessness and direct threats to their identities as regards language and religion. In 2022, there were also other positive events and practices highlighted, including the thirtieth anniversary of the dispute settlement to South Tyrol, highlighting how two Governments – Italy and Austria – managed to resolve tensions around minority grievances and claims of exclusion and discrimination and conflicts peacefully through years of negotiations and a process of dialogue, and the protection of the rights of minorities.

54. Another positive sign can be seen in the almost exponential growth in the participation of minorities at the United Nations and regional forums. Before the pandemic, the number of participants in the Forum on Minority Issues had exceeded 600 in recent years, with the most recent session of the Forum in 2022 recording that number, despite the remaining travel obstacles for some minorities outside of Western Europe. During the four years since 2019, the regional forums have involved some 1,617 participants, including 68 different States attending on 107 occasions, and with 676 recommendations. On a regional basis, these can be broken down as: Europe and Central Asia, 615 participants and 51 States (four regional forums held); Asia and the Pacific, 419 participants and 24 States (four regional forums held); Africa and the Middle East, 350 participants and 13 States (three regional forums held); and the Americas, 233 participants and 19 States (two regional forums held).

55. The large and increasing participation of delegates at the Forum on Minority Issues in Geneva, the regional engagement and mobilization of minorities – and States – when they are presented with greater access and opportunities to participate in their own areas of interest with the regional forums, as well as the frequent communications and requests presented to the Special Rapporteur in his awareness-raising and communications activities all confirm the need and desire for greater United Nations engagement on minority issues.

56. The success of and contributions from the regional forums can be seen as a positive development that may contribute to a new momentum and mobilization, especially when combined with an institutional acknowledgement at the United Nations. The General Assembly high-level event on 21 September 2022 to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration was a significant moment as it recognized the importance of minority rights protection and signalled that a new impetus was needed.

57. The messages heard and views transmitted are almost universal, namely that: the overall situation at the United Nations is close to one of “negligence and inaction” and the Forum on Minority Issues is important but insufficient since it is limited to only two days, with little or no funding compared with that for other marginalized groups at the United Nations.

58. At the same time, while many commented on how minorities lag behind other groups at the United Nations who are protected by treaties, have voluntary funds or permanent forums, and much more, this was not begrudged but seen by some in a positive light.

59. The development of permanent forums for Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, and voluntary funds or treaties for the many other groups whose rights must be mainstreamed, are often referred to as positive steps and show that the United Nations can and must do more, much more, as the Secretary-General himself admitted.

60. On 21 September 2022, at the high-level event in the General Assembly to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration, the Secretary-General spoke of three core truths enshrined therein, namely: that minority rights were human rights, that the protection of minorities was integral to the mission of the United Nations and that the promotion of those rights was vital to advancing political and social stability and preventing conflict within and between countries. He ended by promising that the commemoration should be a catalyst for action, working together to make the Declaration a reality for minorities everywhere; protecting communities and providing a voice; preventing conflict and ensuring accountability, promoting equality and embracing diversity; and placing human rights at the heart of all that the United Nations does. In essence, that is what is also asked by most minorities in recent years in the Forum on Minority Issues and the regional forums on minorities, and in the submissions and communications to the Special Rapporteur. The main difference is that they have gone further and provided concrete recommendations and proposals for action, which are also reflected in most of the Special Rapporteur's own recommendations as part of his thematic report on the ways forward to recognize and protect the rights of minorities at the United Nations – and to make, as the Secretary-General himself urged, the Declaration a reality for minorities everywhere.

61. An examination of the hundreds of recommendations emanating from the regional and United Nations forums shows that they are broadly in agreement on how to make the Declaration a reality for minorities everywhere. It is striking how recurrently, in all regions, similar proposals for action are made to better protect minority communities, provide opportunities for their voices to be heard, prevent conflicts by promoting equality and embracing diversity and, first and foremost, place human rights at the heart of what the United Nations does.

62. Globally, they tend to be oriented towards: (a) promoting substantively better and stronger legal protection of the human rights of minorities; (b) mainstreaming minority rights in the United Nations itself; (c) and providing the tools and means for a greater civil society presence, visibility and role at the United Nations, as is increasingly the case for other marginalized groups.

63. There are many more than can be mentioned in this thematic report, but most of the recommendations of the regional and United Nations forums can be consulted online,²⁷ while those of the Forum on Minority Issues are to be found on the web page of the mandate,²⁸ with a convenient search tool also available to facilitate consultations.²⁹

64. The main, indeed universal and always recurrent, demand has been the call for a treaty to better recognize and protect the human rights of minorities, which would include an implementation mechanism and also more innovative and non-confrontational mechanisms to constructively engage and assist States in more fully complying with their human rights obligations in relation to minorities. The suggestion is that the time has come for the United Nations to move forward and prove that the protection of minorities is integral to the mission of the United Nations and that the promotion of those rights is vital to advancing political and social stability and preventing conflict within and between countries.

65. Many submissions to the Special Rapporteur and even recommendations made at the regional forums and the Forum on Minority Issues have included calls for the United Nations to launch a process, such as drafting a treaty, as a legitimate area of international cooperation

²⁷ See www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-minority-issues/regional-forums-minority-issues.

²⁸ See www.ohchr.org/en/hrc-subsidiary-bodies/minority-issues-forum.

²⁹ See www.minorityforum.info.

in a climate in which there has been a regression in the international protection of minority rights. While such a proposal is not novel,³⁰ it has undoubtedly become louder as the situation of minorities worsens in many parts of the world and is continuously repeated and emphasized as an idea whose time has come.

66. Consultations by the Special Rapporteur were ongoing in 2022 with numerous minority representatives, experts and minority civil society organizations, though in a sense these have been ongoing alongside the regional and United Nations forums since 2019. As a result, most felt the present report should be a catalyst for action to work together to make the Declaration a reality for minorities everywhere. As a result, and to reflect the central, universal recommendation in this regard, the Special Rapporteur is putting forth a proposal for a draft global minorities treaty,³¹ as an idea whose time has come in the hope that the United Nations will initiate a process that could ultimately lead to a legally binding instrument.

67. The other main recommendations in this thematic report are based on an analysis of the recommendations of the regional and United Nations forums, the contributions in response to the call for submissions to the Special Rapporteur and other consultations.

VI. Recommendations

68. **The Special Rapporteur invites States, the Human Rights Council and the United Nations to initiate a process to develop a legally-binding instrument on the protection of the rights of minorities, inspired by the Special Rapporteur's proposed draft treaty,³² which covers some of the most important areas of human rights and concern for national or ethnic, religious or belief and linguistic minorities, as well as innovative and constructive new approaches to assist States in complying with their human rights obligations. Such an instrument should help address gaps in the protection of the substantive rights of minorities, such as citizenship rights; economic rights, including those relating to land, with a focus on sustainable and inclusive development of minority regions while protecting the natural environment; the right to participation in decision-making, which needs to reflect existing State practice with regard to the norms of autonomy; and, last, but not least, the rights of religious or belief minorities. It should also serve to clarify the scope of international minority protection, focusing on the inclusion of caste- and descent-based groups, and be adapted, in particular, to minorities with a particularly grave history of exclusion, such as the Dalits, Roma and immigrant minorities.**

69. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that a new guidance note be issued to operationalize the Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in order to put into action the mainstreaming and integration of minority rights across all pillars and activities of the United Nations. The Special Rapporteur also urges the United Nations system to reactivate and implement the integration of minority rights into its work at the global, regional and country levels.**

70. **The Special Rapporteur also invites States, the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly to create a permanent forum for minorities to improve the capacity of the United Nations to effectively address the problems facing minorities. In line with the precedents of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, a new forum should be composed of representatives of minority groups, taking into account diversity, regional balance and gender parity, to serve in their personal capacity as experts. The permanent forum should convene on a rotating basis in New York and Geneva, to coordinate with both the human rights and security mechanisms of the United Nations. It should be created alongside a supportive voluntary fund, to consist of organizations, institutions and persons representing minorities around the world. This would further enhance the**

³⁰ A/77/246, para. 71.

³¹ Available from https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/Annex1.-A-HRC-52-27_0.docx.

³² Ibid.

participation of minorities and of institutions and organizations that speak on their behalf in meetings of United Nations bodies on issues that affect them.

71. The Special Rapporteur recommends that the General Assembly adopt an international day, year or decade for minorities so that the United Nations and the international community are able to mark and officially celebrate the contributions of minorities nationally and globally, draw attention to the need to address the marginalization of minorities across the world, and encourage attention and action to enhance the understanding and protection of their human rights.

72. The Special Rapporteur invites States, the United Nations and the Human Rights Council to strengthen the Forum on Minority Issues by increasing the number of days on which it meets and the funding for its operations, and to ensure an intersectional dimension to its sessions. This should extend to the support and resources for the organization of regional forums.

73. The Special Rapporteur urges the United Nations to mainstream and integrate in the training of United Nations staff, where appropriate, especially in its work at the global, regional and country levels, the #Faith4Rights toolkit, in particular module 6 on minorities.

74. The Special Rapporteur invites specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system to contribute to the full realization of the rights and principles set forth in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, within their respective fields of competence, in accordance with article 9 thereof, including by developing training materials and programmes on minority rights, including in relevant languages, with the effective participation and cooperation of minorities' organizations and representatives.

75. The Special Rapporteur invites States, specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system to take note of and consider the useful resources and expertise on conflict prevention and the protection of the rights of minorities provided by centres such as the Åland Islands Peace Institute and the Institute for Minority Rights at the European Academy of Bolzano, as well as the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and related recommendations and guidelines.

76. The Special Rapporteur urges OHCHR and other United Nations entities to update their guidance, policy and other documents to reflect more recent understanding and the evolution of the rights of minorities, including with regard to the definitions of the different categories of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities put forth by the Special Rapporteur in his 2019 and 2020 thematic reports to the General Assembly.³³

77. The Special Rapporteur recommends that, in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the protection of minorities be integrated therein to ensure that minority groups are not left behind. Voluntary national review reports should systematically measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals for minority communities.

78. The Special Rapporteur encourages the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities to be more strongly engaged with the Forum on Minority Issues, including by reporting to the Forum about minority-related activities conducted by each United Nations agency.

79. The Special Rapporteur invites United Nations country and regional offices to establish a position of minority human rights officer to advise, promote and monitor the implementation and mainstreaming of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities in the United Nations system.

³³ A/74/160 and A/75/211.

80. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that the United Nations should issue separate guidelines to national human rights institutions to provide specific guidance on the protection and promotion of the human rights of minorities.**

81. **The Special Rapporteur reiterates his call to the General Assembly to adopt a resolution on enhancing the participation of minorities' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them, based on a similar resolution for Indigenous Peoples;³⁴ and, likewise, to include consultations with minority groups and a report by the Secretary-General, and a United Nations world conference on the rights of persons belonging to minorities.³⁵**

³⁴ General Assembly resolution 71/321.

³⁵ [A/77/246](#), para. 77.