

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Ms. Rita Izsák
70th session of the UN General Assembly Third Committee
28 October 2015

Madame Chairperson,

We would like to thank the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Ms. Rita Izsák, for her succinct but thorough presentation today.

We welcome the focus of this year's report on access to justice and the situation of minorities in the criminal justice system. In that regard, we especially commend the Special Rapporteur for including the status of minority victims in her report. We also appreciate the Special Rapporteur's work in preparing the first ever comprehensive study on the human rights situation of Roma worldwide, which was presented to the Human Rights Council in June this year.

Madame Chairperson,

Just a month ago, our world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this unique agreement we pledged to “foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies”. We decided to “promote rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all” and to “promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies”. All of these are crucial for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic religious and linguistic minorities.

Now it is time to turn vision into action, ensuring that nobody is left behind. While looking for ways and means for actual implementation, the comprehensive set of recommendations cannot come in a more opportune moment. They give an excellent opportunity to all countries to check their status in the fight against discrimination in this specific area. This topic also shows the universal character of the agenda: all countries have their work cut out for themselves.

Turning to the report, we agree that the collection of disaggregated data is an important starting point to address discrimination. What we cannot measure, we cannot manage. We hope that the indicator set of the 2030 agenda will be construed in a way that it will require such action.

We also support, among others, recommendations on the need for national strategies, strengthening awareness in institutions, working with all stakeholders, ensuring inclusion and building trust, by building bridges between minorities and law enforcement, and stakeholders of the criminal justice system.

Fight against discrimination, that is, the proper running of justice systems, does not really require more resources than running an imperfect one. Therefore, this is one of the areas that can become a real driver and enabler, assisting in reaching our goal related to inclusive and resilient societies, but also in implementing all three pillars of sustainable development.

Madame Chairperson,

Let me conclude by reiterating our strong support to the Special Rapporteur's work and mandate and encourage her to continue to support the implementation of the 2030 agenda through her special tools.

In that regard, we look forward to the eighth session of the Forum on Minority Issues, which is an important venue for identifying best practices in the promotion and protection minority rights.

Thank you.