



Statement of H.E. Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu, Apostolic Nuncio
Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations
and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the 52nd Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur
on Minority Issues
23 March 2023

Mister President,

The Delegation of the Holy See takes note of the Report of the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues which examines the efforts made over the past thirty years towards promoting and protecting the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, since the adoption of the relevant UN Declaration.

The Holy See echoes the concern expressed by the Special Rapporteur over the continued marginalization, exclusion and discrimination against national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in many places of the world. It is particularly disconcerting that seventy-five percent of stateless persons worldwide are targeted because they belong to these groups, and that the majority of conflicts involve such minorities with grievances of exclusion and discrimination.

Rather than being treated with fear, hatred and discrimination, these persons should be valued as fellow brothers and sisters of the one human family. As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly affirms, all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and human rights. These fundamental human rights must never be seen as reserved for the powerful or the many, but must be respected for all people, at all times and in all places.

Mister President,

The Holy See would also like to affirm that different ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups enrich the cultural and social life of their communities. As Pope Francis has said, *“when we open our hearts to those who are different, this enables them, while continuing to be themselves, to develop in new ways. The different cultures that have flourished over the centuries need to be preserved, lest our world be impoverished. At the same time, those cultures should be encouraged to be open to new experiences through their encounter with other realities, for the risk of succumbing to cultural sclerosis is always present. That is why ‘we need to communicate with each other, to discover the gifts of each person, to promote that which unites us, and to regard our differences as an opportunity to grow in mutual respect.’”*¹

Thank you, Mister President.

¹ Pope Francis, Encyclical Lettera *Fratelli tutti*, n. 134.