



**OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS**



**Rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic,
religious and linguistic minorities**

Commission on Human Rights resolution 2003/50

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, as well as subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly on the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, as well as its own resolution 2002/57 of 25 April 2002 on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

Recalling also its resolution 1995/24 of 3 March 1995 as well as Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/31 of 25 July 1995 and decision 1998/246 of 30 July 1998 on the mandate of the Working Group on Minorities of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights,

Taking note of Sub-Commission resolution 2002/16 of 14 August 2002 on the rights of minorities,

Recalling the report of the International Seminar on Cooperation for the Better Protection of the Rights of Minorities (E/CN.4/2002/92) held in the framework of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance on 1, 2 and 5 September 2001 in Durban, South Africa,

Considering that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to political and social stability and peace and enrich the cultural diversity and heritage of society,

Concerned at the growing frequency and severity of disputes and conflicts involving minorities in many countries, and their often tragic consequences, and that persons belonging to minorities often suffer disproportionately the effects of conflict resulting in the violation of their human rights and are particularly vulnerable to displacement through, inter alia, population transfers, refugee flows and forced relocation,

Concerned also at instances of victimization or marginalization of persons belonging to minorities in situations of political or economic instability,

Affirming that effective measures and the creation of favourable conditions for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, ensuring effective non-discrimination and equality for all, as well as full and effective participation in matters affecting them, contribute to the prevention and peaceful solution of human rights problems and situations involving minorities,

Emphasizing the importance of the timely identification of human rights problems and situations involving national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

Acknowledging that minority rights promote tolerance within societies and recognizing that the promotion of a culture of tolerance through education, in particular human rights education, shall be advanced by all States,

Acknowledging also that the United Nations has an increasingly important role to play regarding the protection of minorities by, inter alia, taking due account of and giving effect to the Declaration,

Welcoming the work of the Working Group on Minorities in promoting regional and local initiatives for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, including by organizing regional expert seminars,

Noting with satisfaction the emphasis by the Working Group on Minorities on the participation of minority representatives in its work,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (E/CN.4/2003/82), of the report of the Working Group on Minorities on its eighth session (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2002/19 and Corr.1), in particular the conclusions and recommendations contained therein, and of the Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2002/57 on the situation of national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, in particular with respect to conflict prevention (E/CN.4/2003/87);

2. *Reaffirms* the obligation of States to ensure that persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities may exercise fully and effectively all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law, as proclaimed in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities;

3. *Urges* States to take, as appropriate, all the necessary constitutional, legislative, administrative and other measures to promote and give effect to the Declaration;

4. *Urges* States and the international community to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as set out in the Declaration, including through equal access to education and the facilitation of their full participation in the economic progress and development of their country, and to apply a gender perspective while doing so;

5. *Urges* States to pay specific attention to the negative impact of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance on the situation of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, and draws attention to the relevant provisions of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted in September 2001 by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (A/CONF.189/12, chap. I), including the provisions on forms of multiple discrimination;

6. *Calls upon* States to give special attention to the promotion and protection of the human rights of children belonging to minorities, taking into account that girls and boys may face different types of risks;

7. *Also calls upon* States to take all appropriate measures to protect the cultural and religious sites of national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;

8. *Welcomes* the publication by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of the *United Nations Guide for Minorities* containing an overview of relevant procedures and mechanisms of regional and international organizations and encourages its broad dissemination;

9. *Calls upon* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to promote, within his mandate, the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and to engage in a dialogue with Governments concerned for that purpose;

10. *Invites* the High Commissioner to continue his efforts to improve the coordination and cooperation of United Nations agencies and programmes active in the field of the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;

11. *Invites* the human rights treaty monitoring bodies when considering reports submitted by States parties, as well as special representatives, special rapporteurs, working groups of the Commission and relevant United Nations agencies and programmes, to continue to give attention, within their respective mandates, to situations and rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;

12. *Encourages* the Working Group on Minorities, as requested by the Sub-Commission, within its mandate, to take due account of activities undertaken and reports prepared by intergovernmental regional organizations on human rights problems and situations involving minorities;

13. *Calls upon* States, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations to participate actively in the work of the Working Group, including through written contributions;

14. *Further calls upon* States to facilitate the effective participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations and persons belonging to minorities in the work of the Working Group and invites the High Commissioner to seek voluntary contributions in this regard;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner to provide the Working Group with all the necessary assistance, in particular the staff and resources required, to fulfil its mandate;

16. *Requests* the High Commissioner to invite Governments and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to submit their views on how best to protect the rights of persons belonging to minorities;

17. *Also requests* the High Commissioner to examine existing mechanisms with a view to enhancing their cooperation and effectiveness and to identify possible gaps in the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and to report thereon to the Commission at its sixtieth session;

18. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to make available, at the request of Governments concerned, qualified expertise on minority issues, including the prevention and resolution of conflicts, to assist in existing or

potential situations involving minorities and to report to the Commission at its sixtieth session on concrete projects and activities in this regard;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Commission at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

20. *Decides* to continue its consideration of this question at its sixtieth session under the same agenda item.

59th meeting
23 April 2003
[Adopted without a vote.]

See chap. XIV. - E/CN.4/2003/L.11/Add.4]