

Minority Women Rights and Effective Participation in Economic Social and Cultural Life

Presented for **Humanity Knights Network** by Mavis Orjime

(Email: [redacted]@yahoo.com; Phone: [redacted])

Thank you Madam Chair for giving me the floor

My name is Mavis Orjime. I represent Humanity Knights Network, an organization that works on development assistance in Northern Nigeria and hereby make statement on the situation of the Christian minority women in Northern Nigeria.

Religious minorities in Northern Nigeria comprise mostly of Christian Indigenous and Settler communities where the Sharia law is operative. Violation of their rights to own property, discrimination in employment opportunities and discrimination in Economic participation hinders the Minority women's effective participation in Economic life.

The Government of Nigeria under the current leadership affords an affirmative 35% margin for women's political participation in governance which is a progressive measure of enhancing women rights. However, it is yet to address the specific challenges that occur as a result of religious violence and violation of their rights to education and economic participation. In Addition, lack of disaggregated data on economic poverty reduction strategies makes it hard to ascertain accurate impact of economic measures acclaimed for religious minority women Northern Nigeria.

- I propose that for the effective application of the recommendation 98, Development agencies such as the UN and international communities should work with the Nigerian government¹ to mainstream minority rights into her economic poverty reduction strategy policy (National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy - NEEDS) to address the specific issues of discriminated Christian minorities, to secure their participation in economic life.
- I further recommend the Government of Nigeria to develop legislation that protects the property rights of religious minorities and compensatory schemes for assisting their recovery from economic losses occasioned by religious conflicts and marginalization.

Allow me madam chair, to thank Minority Rights Group International for facilitating my participation in this Forum. Thank you all for your kind attention.

¹ United Nations Declaration on Minorities; ¹ Asma J.2005 Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief Para. 39-45,54-57&59