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**Fifth UN Forum on Minority Issues**  
Identification of Challenges and Problems Encountered with regard to Practical  
Implementation of the Declaration  
Mr. Pierre Hegay, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization


Thank you Madam Chair,

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization would like to draw attention to paragraph 31 and 51 of the recommendations about the necessity of the existence of minority organizations and associations and the responsibility of the State to integrate their perspectives in its policies. UNPO welcomes the creation of consultation and negotiations mechanisms in several countries, which has increased cooperation between minority groups and governments. Nonetheless, we feel that there is still one major hurdle in numerous countries to achieve such cooperation and realize the objectives of the Declaration. Unfortunately this obstacle has not been included in any recommendations of the Forum since its creation.

UNPO thinks it is necessary to incorporate into the draft recommendations the specific experiences of minority political and civil society groups facing situations of State-sponsored intimidation and oppression for their political activities, in particular through anti-terrorism laws. I will briefly introduce the issue before moving into concrete steps for action.

It is well known that minority groups are often deliberately and collectively subjected to violence as a result of their identity. Likewise, minority groups and indigenous peoples often face violent reprisals from States when they engage in political life or set up civil society organizations. In numerous instances, States attempt to discredit their political activities by presenting them as a violent fight against the Nation rather than a demand for effective participation into society. During the last decade, several anti-terrorism laws have been created or revived and used disproportionately against minority groups. The Mapuche in Chile, Muslims in the US and the UK, the Uyghurs in Central Asia, the Oromo and Ogaden in Ethiopia are only a few examples of these numerous minority groups who have been affected. Branded as separatists or terrorists, minority and indigenous groups face serious State-sponsored human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, disappearances, and extra-judicial killings. It is urgent for the Forum to address this issue, as these laws highly compromise the efforts made to implement the Declaration.

In order to address this issue, UNPO recommends the following concrete measures:

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- During their country visits, special procedures mandate holders should ensure that minority organizations and minority human rights defenders, particularly those facing reprisals by the State, are specifically and directly consulted for their experiences, as their marginalization and isolation makes it difficult to monitor and report on abuses against them.
  - Create mediation mechanisms between States and minority organizations and associations within the framework of the rights contained in the Declaration.
  - Include the issue of anti-terrorism laws in the discussions of the Forum, as these laws are often used to discredit and quell down minority organizations and associations. The absence of any reference to these laws in the Forum recommendations since 2008 undermines our efforts to achieve the implementation of the Declaration.

Thank you for your attention.