

Thank you Mr. President,

The Lutheran World Federation commends Madam Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Ms Rita Izsak for her relentless efforts in promoting minority rights in general and for this special report on the “Human Rights Situation of Roma worldwide” in particular.

The LWF through its European Desk and its 41 member churches across Europe including its ecumenical partners such as the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), has been committed to the protection and promotion of the rights of Roma People. Two years ago we organized a broad-based consultation with church representatives, Roma activists, policy makers and independent experts in the field focusing on migration and equal citizenship of Roma in Europe. This consultation was concluded with “A call for Justice and Dignity for Roma People”, a document that carries 12 recommendations to churches, church-related organizations and Christians in Europe. Some of these recommendations include:

- To enhance knowledge about Roma culture and history in the churches and in societies,
- To use the International Holocaust Remembrance Day and International Roma Day as opportunities to make Roma history and culture more visible and known.

As such, we highly welcome this report as it reinforces the work we do and emboldens us to do more. Our organization will commit itself to disseminating this report further, discuss and reflect upon its content with our relevant partners/networks, and encourage our member churches to lobby their respective governments for the implementation of your recommendations.

Madam Special Rapporteur,

For the sake of our learning process we would like to ask you the following two questions:

1. During the course of your research have you come across any religiously motivated discrimination, stereotypes or violence against the Roma people?
2. What roles do you think faith based organizations can play to address these challenges?

I thank you Mr. President