

“A quantum leap for human rights education on freedom of religion or belief”

- Film and media shape public opinion and can mobilize action to build a culture of freedom of religion or belief, said Dr Dwayne Menezes, co-founder of Think Film Impact Production when the FORB Learning Platform was launched at the UN earlier today.

Geneva. Diplomats and representatives of the EU and UN attended a discussion on the impact of film and media in promoting freedom of religion or belief. The event was organized in connection with the 37th session of the Human Rights Council together with Think Film Impact Production.

The Freedom of Religion or Belief (FORB) Learning Platform was launched at the event. It is an initiative of the Nordic Ecumenical Network on International Freedom of Religion or Belief (NORFORB) and provides resources to help individuals, communities and decision-makers learn, reflect upon and promote freedom of religion or belief for all. It includes resources for personal study and for educators and facilitators. Through learning, the platform seeks to contribute to building a social, political and legal culture of freedom of religion or belief for all from the grassroots up and the top down.

- This is a vitally important contribution and a quantum leap for human rights education on freedom of religion or belief, said Prof Ahmed Shaheed, the UN special rapporteur on FORB, who presented his annual report to the Human rights council last week.

- Eighteen months ago, at a seminar here in the UN, a parliamentarian asked where they can learn about freedom of religion or belief. No-one had an answer. Civil servants, journalists and civil society faced the same problem, said NORFORB representative Katherine Cash. The FORB Learning Platform aims to fill this gap, providing online education to equip civil society, faith communities, decision makers and the media to promote FORB for all.

Jan Figel, EU Special Envoy on FORB outside the EU, called education the most powerful tool for social change:

- I congratulate NORFORB on a timely and needed initiative in order to address common misunderstandings regarding issues of freedom of religion or belief. I will spread knowledge about the FORB Learning Platform wherever I go, he promised.

- We need to unpack human rights for the young generations and the Learning Platform provides useful tools to educate both students and teachers but also the media, said Juliana Sfeir of the educational channel SAT-7 Academy based in Lebanon.

NORFORB and the FORB Learning Platform

[The FORB Learning Platform](#) is an initiative of the Nordic Ecumenical Network on International Freedom of Religion or Belief (NORFORB). It has been developed with the input and advice from both secular and different faith based organisation, as well as international experts.

As of today the platform has been embraced by over 40 associate partners, spanning from secular to faith-based organisations, networks of parliamentarians to media companies.

NORFORB representatives from [Stefanus Alliance](#), Norway; the [Swedish Mission Council](#); the [Danish Mission Council](#), the [Finnish Ecumenical Council](#) and [FELM](#), Finland attended the launch.