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Minority Rights to Education

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UD Panzer Chair in Education and adjunct law professor Charles Russo is one of only eight Americans invited to present at the U.N. Forum on Minority Issues Dec. 15-16. The forum was called to finalize a draft document of "Recommendations on Minorities and the Right to Education."

"Education is more than a commodity or a service; it is a human right," the statement reads. "Minorities in various regions of the world suffer disproportionately from unequal or restricted access to quality education, and inappropriate education strategies. Lack of education leads to denial of civil and political rights including rights to freedom of movement and freedom of expression."

Russo is scheduled Tuesday to present his recommendations on the statement regarding the relationship between desegregation and social cohesion.

"If societies are to become socially cohesive, they must be inclusive, not exclusive," Russo said.

He plans to tell the forum participants that religious, ethnic, gender and cultural integration of schools is necessary to create peace in society.

"If tolerance and acceptance of diversity of religious beliefs and world views are not encouraged in schools and not ingrained in the curriculum, then we cannot expect to find them present throughout the rest of societies where social cohesion is the goal," he said.

Russo has been a visiting professor at Potchefstroom (now Northwest) University in South Africa; Queensland University of Technology in Australia; South East European University in Macedonia; the University of Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

He contributes articles regularly to Education Law Reporter, School Business Affairs and a wide array of publications.

For more information, contact Cameron Fullam, assistant director of media relations, at 937-229-3256 or fullam@udayton.edu.