

Madam Chairperson,

Distinguished Representatives,

Allow me briefly present you general information on the rights and freedoms enjoyed by the Azerbaijani citizens of different ethnic origin.

The Republic of Azerbaijan has a multinational and multiconfessional population. The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan which ensures the equality of all citizens irrespective of ethnic, religious or racial origin, reflects the basic provisions of National Policy. Article 25 of the Constitution stipulates that the state guarantees equality of rights and liberties of everyone, irrespective of race, nationality, religion, language, sex, origin, financial position, occupation, political convictions, membership in political parties, trade unions and other public organizations. Rights and liberties of a person, citizen cannot be restricted due to race, nationality, religion, language, sex, origin, conviction, political and social belonging.

Along with vast majority Azerbaijanians, the population of Azerbaijan consists of Azerbaijani citizens of Lezghin, Russian, Armenian, Talish, Avar, Tatar, Turkish, Georgian, Kurdish, Jewish and other ethnic origins. The Constitution stipulates that everyone has the right to use his/her mother tongue and the right to be educated, carry out creative activity in any language, as desired. Nobody may be deprived of right to use his/her mother tongue.

The education in Azerbaijan is conducted in three languages: Azerbaijani, Russian and Georgian (I-XI classes). The other Azerbaijani children of other ethnic origin have the opportunity to study Lezghin, Talish, Avar, Udi, Tat, Khinaliq and Kurdish languages. Their mother tongue is taught at the level of primary education (I-IV classes).

More than 15 newspapers and journals are being published in the languages of ethnic minorities. Besides, there are regional TV broadcastings in areas where ethnic minorities compactly live.

The ethnic minorities in Azerbaijan are ensured equal cultural rights and have equal access to the cultural heritage of the country. In December of 2006 and 2008 the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan organized project "Cultural diversity of Azerbaijan" within the framework of UNESCO, festive dedicated to the culture of national minorities "Azerbaijan - motherland" would be held every two years.

The Government of Azerbaijan takes necessary measures for the thriving the conditions ensuring all citizens irrespective of race, ethnic origin and religion enjoy the realization of rights and freedoms.

Thank you for your attention.