

Mr. Chairman,

I am honored to attend the first UN Forum on Minority Issues. I would like to thank the experts who have drafted the *Recommendations*, which has shown us their wisdom and hard work. It will enrich and develop the contents of rights of minorities. I hope and trust its drafting and adoption will exert a positive impact on protection and promotion of right to education of minorities and make contributions to building a world of common development, equality and harmony.

China is a united multi-ethnic country. There are 55 ethnic minority groups with a population of 106 million. 155 ethnic autonomous areas nationwide take up 64% of China's territory. By adopting a series of policy measures in accordance with features of ethnic minorities and situations of their areas, it has vigorously developed ethnic minorities education and effectively protected their right to education. Based on China's practice, I would like to make a few suggestions about the *Recommendations*.

- I. I suggest that the *Recommendations* should make it clear that "Education of minorities is an integral part of a country's national education", so as to clarify, in theory, the equal status of education of minorities and its relations with national education, and to strengthen, in practice, responsibilities of the government and educational institutions to better plan and develop education of minorities.

- II. The *Recommendations* has a provision that reads “institutions (and programs) for the education of minorities must be made available”. I suggest that an additional provision be added. “Bodies to administrate education of minorities should be established (or entrusting relevant educational bodies duties to administrate education of minorities) and relevant academic research should be encouraged”. Education of minorities is distinct. In order to protect their rights to education, both educational institutions and administrative bodies of education of minorities have their duties and functions, none of which should be left out. In addition, it is also necessary to carry out relevant researches and to provide policy consultation.
- III. The *Recommendations* has shown due respect to the “local” feature of education of minorities and the important role of “local government” in implementing educational policies. I suggest that relevant provisions make it clear principled rules for local bodies to provide educational service. It could read like this “States should promote local governments to, in accordance with features and needs of minorities, provide effective educational service in a manner different in different areas, ethnic groups or kinds of education”.
- IV. The *Recommendations* will be implemented in countries of different history, culture and religious backgrounds. As a result, may I suggest it pay even more attention to conditions and practice of different countries, give special consideration to difficulties and challenges of developing countries in protecting right to education of minorities so that it has a certain degree of flexibility and accommodation while adhering principles of equality and non-discrimination.

Before coming here, I asked scholars and students of education of ethnic minorities for their views of the *Recommendations*, inducing ethnic minority scholars and students. There were positive towards it and welcomed it.

Thank you.

Bamo Ayi (China)