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Intervention for item III of the provisional agenda
Essential Requirements for an Effective Education Strategy

My name is Manpreet Singh and I am speaking on behalf of Dashmesh Seva Dal, an NGO which is working for Sikh Minorities in India, and also in my capacity as a 2008 OHCHR Minority Fellow.

We would like to thank all of the **member's states representatives and experts**, present in the Minority Forum for giving us opportunity to share our views with respect to the forum theme – "Minorities and Right to Education".

Education is vital to the development of minorities in a number of ways and is one of the most important vehicles by which the integration of minorities into mainstream society can be promoted. It aids everyone's psychosocial development and is necessary for their future opportunities. Additionally, it helps reduce specifically the minority's risks and vulnerabilities.

Since minorities all over the world are faced with infringements of fundamental human rights, there are some **essential requirements** which we can use in providing effective educational services to children from minority groups.

- Firstly, to abolish the practice of race-based **segregation of minority children** in education, including special remedial classes for mentally disabled and other separate, substandard educational arrangements. This can be followed up by implementing a **comprehensive school desegregation plan**, so that all minority children may fully realise their right to education.
- Strengthen anti-discrimination and anti-bias measures, including in both **legislation and social policies**, to reduce discrimination against minorities in all spheres and improve **public perception**.
- Data should be properly collected by the commissions with **reference to enrollment and drop-out rates in schools pertaining to minorities' children** and appropriate measures should be taken to overcome this problem, with the involvement of active NGOs.
- Integrating all minority students into mainstream classes, and, when necessary, design and implement **adequate budgetary allocations and fellowship programs**.
- Responsible authorities **should develop a clear and coherent national education policy and strategy** to ensure that students have access to studying their mother tongue (if not as first language than at least as a second language in practice),

ensuring that suitable teaching materials are provided to schools and appropriate changes are made in the national curriculum.

- Upon recruitment, teachers should be provided with **adequate training on anti-bias education, prejudice in education, methodologies for second language learning, multicultural education**, and effective ways of involving parents and disadvantaged minority communities. They should be provided with adequate incentives and support to teach minority languages.
- It is essentially required as a strategy to revise the curriculum and to produce learning materials with the help of NGOs, to take into account the minority history, culture, values and principles of multicultural education.
- Creating opportunities for **training and development, internships and other funding opportunities to consolidate the effective education strategy** for young under-represented women and men who will be the future leaders of national and international minority movements.
- To encourage extremely poor and disadvantaged minority children to complete primary school there is need to do **budgetary allocations (as national strategy) for free food, clothes, study materials, and free transport facilities from outskirts areas.**
- States should ensure effective remedy for cases of **discrimination** against minority in the fields of education within the legislation as well as other national policies.
- Responsible education and municipal authorities should monitor and support the whole national strategy (with respect to the minority community needs), including **through regular school visits, in order to make further recommendations.**
- Broadening awareness of the priorities of the **“Declaration on the Rights of Minorities”** and creating opportunities for increased minority individual participation in the whole minority development process.

We would also like to invoke the commitment and role of UN Specialized agencies. According to Art. 9 of the **Declaration on the Rights of Minorities**, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system shall contribute to the full realization of the rights and principles set forth in the Declaration, within their **respective fields of competence.**

UNESCO: UNESCO is an agency which is primarily responsible for education, therefore several projects can be proposed. Pilot projects **with bilingual and multilingual education** in schools as well as universities. In a case when a minority lacks knowledge of state language, **to conduct state language programs specifically for the representatives of minorities.** In order to achieve a multicultural society and eliminate discrimination, it would be good to make awareness raising campaigns regarding UN Declaration on Minorities. The **Declaration can be incorporated into a teacher’s training programmes** as well as human rights subjects at school. Additionally, special attention should be made with regards to girls’ education.

UNHCR- In a case where refugees and IDPs exist in the States, they mostly belong the representatives of the minorities groups , and it’s very important to address the **needs specific to the study materials, schools and access to education**, of these vulnerable

groups. Therefore special programs should be conducted with refugees, IDPs and stateless groups.

ILO: is having a great commitment towards non-discrimination in labour rights: We would like the ILO to be more involved in education about the unacceptability of child labour, **a problem that exists mostly in minority communities**. Education about the unacceptability of child labour can be included in the curriculum of the schools as well as in the university. Awareness raising campaigns should be conducted among parents, which will ultimately help to implement an **effective education strategy**.

WHO- Taking into account that minorities are one of the vulnerable groups which suffer from many diseases like HIV/AIDS and TB, the **special awareness campaigns should be conducted among the minority groups of population**. We have related “**right to education with respect to health**”.

UNICEF- Some programs should be prepared for educating minorities on how to obtain **birth registrations for minority children**. If all children will be registered that **will help all the member states also to have consolidated data** and ease out the whole process to take further necessary actions.

UNDP– Programs for the development of **culture and tradition through education, income generating projects**. **Awareness campaigns for minority population to make them aware about the relationship between EDUCATION and DEVELOPMENT**.

In order to improve the educational situation of minorities, the UN Agencies should closely cooperate with the respective Government ministries (e.g. UNESCO-Ministry of Education, WHO-Ministry of Health, and ILO-Ministry of Labour etc.) to achieve constructive outcomes.

Lastly, as per our understanding, the minority issues are most marginalized within all of the UN mechanisms. Most international conflicts and disputes involve minorities. It is extremely important and vital for disadvantaged minorities to be provided with a platform to speak up and raise their issues within the United Nations System. We all are assured that **this new mechanism (Minority Forum)** will address the issues and would be an opportunity for the minority people to make their voices heard and direct the UN system and its specialized agencies to work as stated in the “Minority Declaration”. We wish and request the authorities to give access to all unrepresented and disadvantaged minorities to be present here in the forum and to give appropriate time to NGOs to speak up, **so that experts would be able to analyse the situation and would be able to make a regional strategy for further challenges**. This is the forum for all of the world’s minorities, to eliminate the underrepresentation of minority groups here in this forum, we also request the authorities to make a **Voluntary fund for Minorities** (just like we have for Indigenous people), which would facilitate the participation of all minority representatives in the Forum, from all over the world. Closing our statement, we wish all the success to this Minority Forum in time ahead.

We would like to thank you again for giving us this opportunity to share our views.

Thank You!!