

I am honoured to represent the CEDAW Committee at this first Forum on Minority Issues focusing on the right to education as a human right. During the morning it was pointed out that gender issues are dealt with very briefly and I hope that during our deliberations we will strengthen the inclusion of gender perspective in the final recommendations.

The question before us is the following: What is a proper inclusion of a gender perspective with respect to minorities and their right to education?

The CEDAW Convention provides solid guidance as a gender specific human rights treaty. It provides a consistent human right framework for the protection of all women and girls including women and girls belonging to minorities against all forms of discrimination in all fields of life including the area of education.

In order to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and achieve substantive equality between women and men, the elimination of discrimination against women and girls in the field of education is essential.

The CEDAW Convention contains a specific Article 10 that addresses discrimination against women and girls in the area of education. Article 10 *requires all - 185 - State parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education.*

Minority women and girls, in fact, suffer from multiple forms of discrimination, intersectional discrimination, and compounded discrimination.

The CEDAW Committee addresses multiple discrimination against minority women and in its concluding observations often recommends that States:

- conduct regular and comprehensive studies on discrimination against minority women in the field of education;
- provide information and data on the situation of minority women in the field of education;
- provide statistics disaggregated by sex and race or ethnicity ; This requirement should be included in draft recommendation no 11;
- pay special attention to the needs of women belonging to ethnic minorities by ensuring that they have equal access to education;
- take all appropriate measures, including temporary special measures in accordance with art. 4, paragraph 1 of the CEDAW Convention and the Committee's General Recommendation N. 25 on temporary special

measures, to increase the representation of women, including minority women, in tertiary and higher education;

- place high priority on the reduction of illiteracy rate of women, in particular those belonging to ethnic minority groups;
- provide education, both formal and informal, to women, including ethnic minority women, especially in rural areas; and
- implement measures to decrease dropout rates among minority girls, including minority girls living in rural areas, and reintegrate them into the educational system.

The CEDAW Committee recommends that States parties take a holistic approach to eliminate multiple forms of discrimination that ethnic minority women face and accelerate the achievement of their de facto equality.

In addition to the core principles of equality and non discrimination, it is also very important to use the core principles of the CEDAW Convention on equality between women and men and non discrimination against women, and apply them on minorities, as well as with respect to the right to education.