

In the name of God, the Compassionate the Merciful

**Statement by the
Islamic Republic of Iran**

in

United Nations Forum on Minority Issues

(15 -16 December 2008)

on

"Minorities and the Right to Education"

Madam chairperson,

Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means for realization of other human rights. As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to fully participate in all spheres of the life in society.

Education has a vital role in empowering women, children and other vulnerable groups in different societies.

To ensure inclusive education while respecting diversity and intercultural sensitivity, efforts must be exerted to devise appropriate and practical solutions.

My country is a place of various ethnicities with a variety of cultures. Convergence and peaceful coexistence of the ethnicities residing in this land is the fundamental advantage and characteristic of Iran in the region. In light of the above, ethnicity, race etc doesn't eventuate in superiority or privileges. Consequently, discriminatory approach has no effect on the laws, regulations or the existing policy-making processes of the country.

Under the existing laws, all students irrespective of their race, language, ethnicity and nationality are equally entitled to educational facilities in the country.

In this respect the Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution stipulates that the government is obliged to provide free educational facilities for the whole nation until the end of the secondary school and extend free higher education to the extent that the country meets its own needs. In view of the principles of the Constitution of I.R. Iran (Article 30) which ensures equal access for all to education, all the decisions are based on the principles of equality and justice.

In this regard Ministry of Education is responsible for eradication of illiteracy through formal and informal means for expansion of basic education through involvement of community in order to prepare and pave the way for development and promotion of human rights of all Iranians.

It is worth mentioning that two decades of successful experiences by Iranian Literacy Movement which is considered as a governmental

organization and responsible for rendering educational services up to the end of primary courses for adults is one of the main causes of promotion of literacy in the country particularly in rural area.

In this regard the 20 year Economic Outlook and National Development Plan of Islamic Republic of Iran had paid special attention to the promotion of education as the basis of the development of the country in all areas.

The fourth Socio-economic and cultural Development plan inspired by the 20-year Economic outlook has defined “education for all” as one of the priorities of the educational system of the country. Thus, the National Development plan has been formulated in view of the said goals and objectives with the direct and indirect participation of the public and private sectors.

The plan has envisaged the goals and objectives of the education system in light of “education for all” including development of pre-school education, expansion of education for child girls out of the school system and exceptional children as well as promoting the quality of education priorities of the education system.

Ministry of Education as part of the policy-making and planning system of the country in the area of education is trying to eliminate the inequalities particularly in the ethnic regions by drafting the necessary rules and regulations and allocating the required budgets for alleviation of deprivation in this regard.

The religious minorities in Iran are free to perform their religious education. Despite of their low and scattered population in the country, they have their own schools and teachers based on their principles and values.

To achieve the goals and objectives of the 20 year Economic Outlook and National Development Plan and The fourth Socio-economic and cultural Development plan, the Ministry of Education has embarked upon the following initiatives and projects:

- Implementation of the educational programs for all.
 - Using distance educational program for educating students in deprived areas.
 - Developing boarding schools and government pilot schools in deprived areas.
 - Promoting public education in rural areas.
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 - Holding one month Developing high schools and schools for seniors for educating all school age people
 - courses for the students studying in the first year of primary courses in the bilingual areas.
- Increasing the availability of schools and maximum enrolment of school age children, as well as compulsory high school education.
- Using all legal resources to promote education of nomadic students.

- Establishment of new nomadic schools and boarding schools according to the migration of nomads and the project for increasing quality of nomads education.

Also Iranian Literacy Movement Organization has appropriated especial budget for defining and organizing especial education programs in the provinces in which different sects and tribes are living with the purpose to remove deprivation and discrimination in the education sector. Some of their activities are as follows:

- 1 More than 450000 students finished literacy program in 2006.
- 2 Education of 400 of the teachers (training of the trainers) of the project in the relevant areas, in order to familiarize them with new teaching methods as well as methods for planning and participatory management.
- 3 Education of 500 of teachers of the said provinces in order to be familiar with participatory teaching and learning methods.
- 4 The Literacy Movement Organization is quite active in education of nomads. More than 9000 of nomads covered in the targeted provinces.
- 5 And finally, Madam Chirperson, according to the statistics and reports of UNHCR, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been the host for the longest period of time for largest number of refugees coming from our neighboring countries Afghanistan to our east and Iraq to our west. As such I. R. Iran has provided primary and secondary education for

the refugee's children and youth free of charge, without appropriate and commensurate international recognition and contribution.

I thank you Madam Chairperson,

