

The 1st UN Forum on Minority Issues
15 December 2008

Note for Oral Presentation

Korean International Network

Thank you. Madame Chairperson,
On behalf of Korean International Network, I would like to express deep gratitude for giving me a chance of presentation.

Madame Chairperson,
The right to education of non-national minority must be addressed in the Recommendations.

In Japan, so many non-national Korean minorities, former colonial people suffer from discrimination, exclusion and racial stereotype in education. Please refer to the hand-out “A Case of Non-national Minority: the Korean Minority and its neglected right to Education”.

Let me introduce briefly some examples of discrimination. Korean ethnic schools are categorized as vocational schools just like driving schools or cooking schools, even though they are socially recognized as ordinary schools and meet the requirements of School Education Law in Japan.

Under such a categorization, they do not receive any government subsidies, and as a result, they have to only depend on tuition and private donations. To make it worse, the schools are excluded from the application of taxation measures such as tax exemption or deduction for donors. The Korean schools are suffering from serious fiscal difficulties at the moment.

Moreover, the diploma from a Korean school does not automatically qualify the minority students to enter universities though that of international school even without any legal status does qualify.

A friend of mine, a Korean minority in Japan, says “In Japan, if you want to know about your ethnic background or to study to learn more about it, you need determination and great willpower to endure all discrimination. On the other hand, if you forget about your ethnic identity or ethnic education, Japan is not so bad country to live in.”

Under the unwanted assimilation, the non-national Korean minority has struggled to keep its right to access ethnic education all by themselves since the end of World War Two.

I sincerely hope that Korean minority children can enjoy fully their rights in education and more importantly gain self-esteem, not fearing all types of discrimination or fiscal burden just because of their nationality or ethnicity.

In conclusion, the right of non-national minority must be addressed in the Recommendations. Thank you very much, Madame Chairperson.