

First Forum about Minorities and Education

(Geneva, Switzerland, December 15-16 2008)

Mexican Delegation

- Madame President: First of all, allow me to congratulate you for your nomination and for the management of our deliberations. I would also like to congratulate Mrs. MacDougall for her important labor as an independent expert.
- Mexico recognizes the fundamental role that education carries out as the main pillar and true motor for the development of society, as well as being one of the most efficient means for confronting conditions of poverty and existing inequalities.
- In this sense, education has as an objective to propel the respect and knowledge of the diverse cultures existing in the nation.
- The Mexican Constitution envisages to guarantee and increase the levels of schooling, favoring bilingual and intercultural education, literacy, the conclusion of basic primary schooling, productive skills training, and secondary and higher education.
- Perhaps the most important challenge to the educational project has been and will continue to be the quality of education. For this reason, efforts should be oriented towards the search of educational systems that have greater quality, equity, articulation and flexibility, as well as the strengthening of services that allow for the reduction of inequalities between diverse social classes, thus fostering democratic and intercultural coexistence. This last point is very important.
- In the educational system of Mexico, the focus on Intercultural and Bilingual Education includes the teaching of the languages and cultures of the indigenous regions. Nevertheless, what is relevant is that the focus is oriented towards the development of activities and practices related to the interest for the other, inclusion, respect, and the valuation of diversity and dialogue.
- Achieving a participatory education, oriented towards the formation of free citizens that are responsible, creative and respectful of cultural diversity, constitutes a significant challenge for educational policies. For us to get closer to this purpose, it is necessary to develop more and better educational opportunities for the marginalized social groups deprived of these benefits, improve the quality of education and make it more relevant and appropriate for the distinct cultural groups that compose society.

- Their full incorporation into the benefits of development implies achieving that education contributes to making our countries pluricultural countries that are even more intercultural and consequently, democratic; in this way, interculturality means that the relationships between different members of society are based in the knowledge and appreciation of the richness that signifies diversity. It also implies counting on quality programs of cultural attention that are linguistically pertinent, and that establish spaces of participation and co-responsibility.
- Due to all these reasons, my delegation suggests that in the conclusions of this forum the importance of the quality of education be placed prominently, with a bilingual and intercultural focus, and that education be available to all, inclusive, and without limitation to the marginalized classes of our society.

Thank you very much.