

Ms. Nurcan Kaya - Minority Rights Group International

Thank you Madam Chair.

I work for a non-governmental organisation called Minority Rights Group International.

First, I would like to share a comment on the recommendation number 37 it should be spelled clearly that all minorities have the right to set up and manage their educational institutions and they should get state support when necessary, taking into consideration the fact that minorities in many countries do not have sources and facilities to exercise this right alone.

We would also like to draw your attention to the fact that security of minority children, particularly girls, is in danger in some countries and recommendation should highlight this too. One of the countries that we work on is Turkey. And we recently wrote a report on education right of minorities there. We found out that minorities face discrimination in four main areas there. Roma, displaced and seasonal worker Kurd do not have adequate access to education. Literacy rate is low in particular among women and drop-out rates are high. Many ethnic minorities, including Kurds, Assyrians and Circassians, cannot learn their mother tongue in state schools or get instruction in such languages. These groups have been guaranteed to open private courses, to teach their languages. However, they face various bureaucratic problems in opening and managing them.

Only Armenians, Greeks and Jews are recognised as minorities in Turkey, and they have the right to set up and manage their schools. However, these groups face various discriminatory bureaucratic restrictions too. The mandatory religious classes are covering mainly Sunni Islam and any student other than Christians and Jews are obliged to attend these classes. Texts books include discriminatory statements on minorities. Such as these books profile Armenians and Greeks as betrayers in the Turkish history. Curriculum ignores diversity in the country, and promotes Turkish culture and nationalism.

Finally, I would just like to say our report is going to be published in February. If any person is interested in receiving a copy, please, let me know your contacts.

Thank you.