

Third Session of the Forum on Minority Issues  
“Minorities and effective participation in economic life”  
(Geneva, 14-15 December 2010)

Statement by the representative of the delegation of the Russian Federation

Madam Chairperson,

The draft Forum recommendations call on the states to implement both targeted and inclusive approaches to solving problems of the economic and social exclusion of minorities. In this context, I would like to briefly present the Russian experience in creating conditions for the effective participation of national minorities in the economic life and the measures adopted by the government in support of these activities.

The guarantees safeguarded in the legislation of the Russian Federation form the basis for the protection of human rights regardless of nationality, race or religious affiliation. Existing legislation providing access to training, housing, labour market, healthcare and social security fully applies to all citizens of the Russian Federation.

It is a common practice in our country to use a programme methodology for providing support to the Federal subjects of Russia and the whole population residing in this territory. The section providing for measures to improve the socio-economic situation in the areas populated by substantial numbers of minorities, including the issues of overcoming unemployment, ensuring access to quality education, health and other social services forms an essential part of those programmes.

At the same time, a number of targeted programmes aimed at certain ethnic groups are being implemented. One of the examples of such programmes is the programme “Socio-economic and ethno-cultural development of Russian Germans”, which foresees implementation of projects in the field of capital construction, social development and engineering infrastructure in the areas populated by substantial numbers of Russian Germans.

The indigenous minorities take a special position in Russia. In relation to these peoples, often living in difficult climatic conditions and having traditional lifestyles, three targeted federal and dozens of regional socio-economic development programmes have been implemented; additionally, the budgetary subsidies to support reindeer herding and livestock breeding were provided to Federal subjects of Russia over the last 15 years. Creation of non-budgetary funds of credit support for enterprises of minority peoples was made possible thanks to the agreements between large industrial companies and the regional authorities, local governments and indigenous communities in the framework of the development of public-private partnerships.

Dear Madam Chairperson,

I would like to draw your attention once more to the well-known problem of excessive requirements with regard to proficiency in the state language being imposed on persons belonging to minorities, which is barring minority members from employment in the public and private sectors in a number of countries. We have already heard today, that such practices adversely affect the level of employment and income, and generally, the participation of minorities in the economic life.

The introduction of high fines, stricter requirements for proficiency in the official language, the availability of lists of occupations that require certification of proficiency in the official language, lead to marginalisation of minorities from the labour market. We believe that states should take additional measures to ensure employment and economic integration of minorities, including necessary professional and linguistic training.

Thank you for attention.