

Speech of the Russian Federation Representative on the
5th Session of the Forum on minority issues
(Geneva, November 27, 2012)

Today we celebrate the 20th anniversary of one of the cornerstone documents in the realm of minority rights protection. This document set forth the necessary level of minorities' protection and creates conditions for the uniform understanding and implementation of minority rights.

We can observe how the international law on protection of different minority groups is changing during last decades. International treaties are not restricted to stating rights and freedoms but regulate them in details. The mechanisms of monitoring and control are strengthened. In line with this, international community started to pay more attention to the status of different peoples living in the multi-national states.

Despite the fact that interethnic relations in each country have their own peculiarities, the strategies of preserving ethno-cultural diversity are akin. They are reflected in the provisions of the Declaration and consist in the adaptation and perfection of legislation, creation of the system of teaching in minorities' languages and broadening the scope of their use including establishment of mass media in these languages, increase of representation in state authorities etc.

At the same time, speaking today about certain success in the protection of minorities, we should not become complacent.

On repeated occasions Russian Federation urged not to ignore such basic problems of the modern Europe as mass statelessness in certain European states, limitation of political and social-economic rights of minorities, rise of xenophobia and neo-Nazism, status of the so-called 'new minorities' – migrants in the Western and Central Europe. Unconcerned for these phenomena and disregard for the international obligations by states hamper establishment and dissemination of the principles and approaches envisaged in the Declaration.

In some states we are witnessing that ethnic and religious groups are subjected to measures conflicting with the letter and spirit of the Declaration and other international instruments on human rights. This contradiction exists regardless of justification and references to the legislation employed by those states to justify their actions.

Russian Federation advocates the preservation in the Forum's agenda of all issues topical for these parts of population with the emphasis on the adherence to the norms and principles of minorities' protection.

