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Forum on Minority Issues
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Legal framework and key concepts

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Dear Mr Chairman. I would like to stress the importance of this forum, where the voices of representatives of minorities will be heard at a global level.

My name is Sarvar Salimov, I am a representative of ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan, and I work at the Institute for Youth Development.

Against the background of the global developments in the sphere of human rights violations, which lead to hundreds of thousands of victims, I would like to recall the meaning of the existence of the United Nations as an institution for maintaining and strengthening international peace and security, [and] development of cooperation between States. Unfortunately, mechanisms, instruments and recommendations of the UN do not always provide practical assistance to problem solving at the national and international level. The tragic events of 2010 in South Kyrgyzstan and consequences thereof left a negative mark in the history of the country, and became a cause of human rights violations and an increased frequency of cases of discrimination on ethnic grounds.

Turning to the rights and opportunities of minorities in Kyrgyzstan, I would like to highlight the importance of several aspects:

- equal access to quality education, both in a minority language and in the state language, granted to all citizens, regardless of ethnic, religious or linguistic identity, living in remote areas, in order to ensure the possibility of admission to a higher educational establishment and continued growth;
- equal access to civil and political rights as well as economic and social benefits, which are guaranteed to people in accordance with the relevant covenants, in order to ensure that a citizen of the state does not feel marginalised and limited in his/her choice and opportunities;
- representation of minorities in law enforcement and judicial authorities, which will contribute to an impartial implementation in good faith of the functions of these authorities, with no discrimination of any groups, particularly in regions, which are inhabited by a large number of minorities.

Kyrgyzstan received all these aspects amongst 196 recommendations in the framework of the UPR Working Group's meeting, which took place in early 2015. And we call on the government to work together in this direction to ensure proper attention to minority issues and prevent more critical consequences such as involvement of representatives of minorities in the radical groups ranks.

We all know that the most developed countries are multinational and pay special attention to the representatives of different ethnic, religious and cultural groups. This is one of the key factors of the development of both the region and the entire state.

I, as well as the representatives of minorities in all the countries, do not need anything more than having equal access to what is guaranteed under the international and national regulations, which were voluntarily adopted by the state. I feel very concerned about the development of my country. I am Uzbek, but first and foremost I am a citizen of Kyrgyzstan. I call on all governments not to treat minorities as a special group, but first and foremost, treat them as citizens of the country and to ensure equal opportunities and rights.

Thank you.