



MINORITY RIGHTS GROW INTERNATIONAL
SLIA QUATRINI

Thank you, Madame Chair.

Mr Special Rapporteur, I reckon you will agree that language rights are not limited to the right to education, however this same right is a prerequisite /essential for accessing a variety of other rights.

I wonder how the right to full individual development and effective participation can be fulfilled when minorities in many countries around the world do not understand the language in which education is provided?

Education in minority languages is not just a way to preserve a community's identity but also to guarantee that minorities better understand the content of education as well as the teaching of the majority language.

[Multilingualism can support the creation of peaceful societies and general development of a country.] Unfortunately, too often national unity and scarce resources are used as excuses to avoid investing in these efforts. It must be noted that most minority languages are endangered because of assimilationist policies, governments therefore have a responsibility in reversing these trends.

Revitalisation is not just about teaching and training, but also involves creating an environment where minority languages are valued and associated to development opportunities, because really if those languages are associated with marginalisation and poverty, minority children will keep being stigmatised and left out.

Moreover, although women are often at the frontline of revitalisation efforts as teachers and researchers, their voices are rarely heard when it comes to decision-making for minority language policies.

We therefore recommend the following:

First. That States implement language policies that support minority languages based on principles of non-discrimination, the right to education, participation and development;

Second. States support revitalisation efforts when necessary as a way to correct previous assimilationist policies in cooperation with language experts and minorities, particularly women; and

Third. States provide curricula that include the teaching of minorities' history for everyone in order to create an environment where minorities and their languages are not stigmatised or perceived as a threat to national unity but as a valued contribution towards diverse and stable societies.

I thank you.