

Armenia
Item 2

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12th Session of the United Nations Forum on Minority Issues: *Education, Language and the Human Rights of Minorities*

Item 2: *Human rights and minority language education*

Amb. Andranik Hovhannisyen, PR, Armenia

Thank you, Chairperson.

Armenia has always been a staunch supporter of this Forum. We welcome the Recommendations of the European Regional Forum on Education, Language and the Human Rights of Minorities.

Armenia is well-placed to contribute to this discussion as we can display a multifaceted approach. We are a nation that provides education to a number of minorities in their mother tongue. In line with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages the National Assembly recognized Assyrian, Yezidi, Greek, Russian and Kurdish as minority languages. Primary education has been made available in those languages for the communities concerned.

Armenians, meanwhile, form a national group with a global diaspora, and the latter outweighs the number of people living in the homeland proper. Armenian communities are spread around the globe in countries as diverse as Argentina and Syria, Canada and Iran, Russia and the US, Georgia and France, Lebanon and Poland, to name just a few. We are grateful to the Governments of all nations that established conducive environment for the preservation of the Armenian identity, culture and language in their midst.

We see the education in mother tongue as a major prerequisite for the development of national identity, ~~and if it is true for us, it should also be applicable to any other national group~~. By the same token, this approach should not create entrenched disadvantages of language incapacity, and with this we want to highlight access to, content of and quality of education for a minority. It is of outmost importance to find the correct balance between the preservation of the minority language and facilitation of effective integration of the community concerned in their larger societies.

To that end a given society as a whole should ensure that a minority population is not marginalized, while integration activities are not transformed into a shrewd cover to enforcing assimilation. Therefore, government-driven minority integration activities, especially in the linguistic context, should be taking place in a non-threatening and most accommodating manner.

I thank you, Chairperson.