

**Madame co Chairman,**

Let me join others in congratulating the both co chairs for your election as the Chair of Twelfth Session of the Forum on Minority which is focusing on Education, Language and the Human Rights of Minorities.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to share a few thoughts with you on this occasion.

**Madame Co president**

1) we are proud to be a nation of multi- cultural and multi linguistic character. Our ethnic and linguistic communities across the country build a very diverse but cohesive mosaic named Iran. The richness and depth of Iranian culture and its old history are beholden to the interactions and integration of its diverse cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic communities. We are proud that our Supreme Leader is Azeri speaking coming originally from north west of Iran; the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council is an Arab speaking man coming from Khuzestan province; and there are Ministers and high level judicial officials who are coming from almost all our ethnic and linguistic communities, Azeri, Kurds, Baluchi, Lurs, etc

2) The Islamic Republic of Iran deeply appreciates this aspect of our demographic characteristic as an invaluable asset and spares no effort in maintaining and further strengthening this feature.

3) Safeguarding our ethnic communities' languages, even their various rich and beautiful dialects, is of tremendous importance. We value ethnic languages and dialects as essential ingredients of Iran's overall social, cultural and even political fabric. That's why the Government is under a duty in accordance with the Constitution to make every effort to preserve various languages spoken within Iran as part of our national identity.

4) According to Article 15 of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution, use of regional and ethnic languages in the

press, the mass media, and the teaching of their literature at schools, is freely permitted

5) Moreover, Article 19 of the Constitution has mentioned that the Iranian people enjoy equal rights, regardless of the tribe or ethnic group to which they belong. Color, race, language, and other such considerations shall not be grounds for and different treatment.

6) After all, Article 30 of the Constitution stipulates that the government is responsible for providing the means for public education for everyone up to the end of high school.

7) Articles 10, 33, 77, 97 and 110 of the Charter of Citizenship Rights have also consolidated the rights of religious communities and in this regard, have banned any type of discrimination and spreading hatred against them and other ethnic, social and political groups. The rights to inter-cultural communications have been also duly recognized and emphasized.

8) Right now there are more than 93 religious communities' schools, operating while members of those communities enjoy the right to study in any other public or private school of their choice. They also have the opportunity to study at various academic levels without any discrimination. Besides, in order to protect the literature and culture of our ethnic and religious communities at the university level, the Ministry of Science and High Education has added the higher education courses for other languages other than Persian (such as Arabic, Azeri and Kurdish) at Iranian universities as well.

9. As part of our endeavor to strengthen and safeguard our ethnic communities' languages, the provincial TV networks has been established in all provinces in Iran which perform their programs in local languages and accents. Universities located in different

provinces are also encouraged to deliver their training courses in local and ethnic language.

I thank you Madame co Chairman