

Thank you Madam Chair,

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Farkhat Ibragimov. I am a former OHCHR Minority fellow. I belong to the Uyghur ethnic minority in Kyrgyzstan. I am going to speak about **the right to a nationality for persons belonging to minorities**.

Statelessness is a very personal issue for me, since my own wife has been a stateless person for many years. I should admit that in Kyrgyzstan we have very good and liberal laws on citizenship, but when it comes to enforcement it is not always the case. My wife was born in Uzbekistan in 1987 and moved to Kyrgyzstan in 2002. When we decided to get married in 2011 we were unable to register our marriage since at that time the only ID she had was a USSR birth certificate. And due to significant differences in the legislations of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and the long and complicated list of required documents she was unable to apply for the Kyrgyz citizenship. Furthermore, could you imagine, Madam Chair, when our daughter was born, we even failed to get birth certificate for her? Although she was entitled to a citizenship according to Articles 11 (paragraph 1) and 12 (paragraph 3) of the Kyrgyz Law on Citizenship.

Finally we managed to settle this issue, and I am extremely thankful to the Government of my country for this. However we had to pass through the years of frustration trying to collect all the required documents and meet all the criteria for getting nationality. There are still families (including those belonging to ethnic minorities) in Kyrgyzstan that face this challenge.

Therefore, Madam Chair, in line with the Law on Citizenship and other national regulatory acts of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities I would like to consider the following recommendations:

1. Simplify birth registration, naturalization and citizenship procedures for stateless minorities;
2. Revise and reduce the list of documents required to apply for the Kyrgyz citizenship for the stateless minorities.
3. Consider harmonisation of relevant legislations of Central Asian countries.

In conclusion, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the OHCHR for this excellent opportunity.

Thank you, Madam Chair.