

**12<sup>th</sup> session of the Forum on Minority Issues**  
**“Education, Language and the Human Rights of Minorities”**  
**Speech given by Ecuador during the round table: objectives of public policy for education**  
**in minority languages and the teaching of these languages**

**Geneva, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

Madam president,

My delegation thanks the panellists for their contributions and agrees that member States, along with the international community, must work together to promote and guarantee education in minority languages, and the teaching of these languages, in accordance with the relevant international and regional agreements.

To that end, Ecuador is launching initiatives that promote and guarantee the preservation and teaching of languages from its indigenous peoples, considering the importance of the exchange of knowledge, the continuity and transmission of their culture, history, identity and intangible heritage, as well as for development, peaceful coexistence and the full exercise of the rights of these minorities and of society as a whole.

Similarly, Ecuador has co-chaired the Executive Committee for the International Year of Indigenous Languages, and it has carried out several specific directives with the aim of promoting and ensuring the preservation of the ancient languages, in addition to having pushed for the declaration of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032 in various forums, whose resolution was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> November.

In Ecuador 18 peoples and 14 nationalities coexist, among other minorities, whose rights are recognised and ensured at a normative level and promoted through diverse public policy.

The National Government is involved in the preservation and rescue of these languages, as well as in the strengthening of the Bilingual Intercultural Education System, for which a Department of Bilingual Intercultural Education has been formed, with administrative, technical, pedagogical, operational and financial independence from the Ministry of Education.

The country has bilingual intercultural community education centres and has developed national bilingual intercultural syllabuses for primary and secondary schools of varying indigenous nationalities, as well as educational resources such as stories and guides in Kichwa, Shuar and Cofán, among other languages, in addition to continuous training for teachers in the provision of reading, writing and mathematics classes.

At the same time, Ecuador is working to improve the education system, as it represents a fundamental component in achieving social and economic equality, in support of indigenous peoples and nationalities, and in line with the constitutional provisions that establish the country as a “plurinational and intercultural” State.

We are aware that we still face certain challenges, which is why a coordinated effort is necessary to promote full and effective participation of all minorities in all areas of society.

Thank you.