

**Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations and
other International Organisations in Geneva**

Speech given by the Delegation from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

12th Session of the Forum on Minority Issues

Education, Language and the Human Rights of Minorities

General Comments

Geneva, 28th November 2019

Thank you, Mr. President.

We commend the celebration of this 12th session of the Forum on Minority Issues. We reaffirm our support for this important function of the Human Rights Council.

We are equally grateful to the distinguished panellists who have shared their knowledge and experience about the need to respect the rights of minority languages, even in relation to the appropriate amount of usage of minority languages, and about the importance of education in minority languages for the protection and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity and of the human rights of people belonging to minority groups.

In Venezuela, the Homeland Plan 2019-2025 (*Plan de la Patria 2019-2025*) outlines as one of its objectives the realisation of the vision of heterogeneity and ethnic diversity in Venezuela and Latin America, with the respect and active participation of minorities and native peoples.

As minority languages in Venezuela come predominantly from indigenous peoples, the Bolivarian Constitution enshrines the State's recognition of the existence of indigenous peoples and communities, their social, political and economic organisation, their cultures, customs, traditions, languages and religions.

In this way, the Magna Carta establishes that indigenous languages are of official use to indigenous peoples and must be respected throughout the Republic, thus preserving cultural heritage for the nation and for humanity.

With the enactment of the Law of Indigenous Languages in 2008, the Venezuelan State requires the use of these languages in indigenous lands, in the areas inhabited by native peoples, in the education, labour, institutional, administrative or judicial spaces, and in the communication methods that exist there.

The general objective of the aforementioned Law is to promote and strengthen the use, revitalisation, preservation, protection and development of indigenous languages, based on the right of their peoples and communities to use their languages as a method of communication and cultural expression.

The National Institute of Indigenous Languages is responsible for meeting these objectives, and will design and implement the public policies and actions intended for the protection, preservation, development and advancement of these languages.

As it begins with policies of protection and promotion of indigenous languages in Venezuela, the State and the natural and legal persons that manage methods of social communication – public or private – must guarantee the necessary means and resources for the revitalisation and promotion of indigenous languages as an instrument of communication, knowledge, education and social and cultural creation.

Thank you.