

Positive Examples and Good Practices and Approaches for Creating an Equitable and Inclusive Society

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Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

Protecting and inheriting the spoken and written languages of ethnic groups is an essential part of creating an equitable and inclusive society. However, the policies regarding the spoken and written languages of ethnic groups vary greatly from country to country. Since its founding, the United States has predominantly pursued an "assimilation" approach to the language education of Native Americans, vigorously promoting "English-only education" while opposing bilingual education. By contrast, since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese government has attached great importance to the protection and inheritance of the languages and cultures of ethnic groups. According to the *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* and the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language*, all ethnic groups shall have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages. Chinese RMB banknotes have five languages on them, namely Chinese, Tibetan, Uyghur, Mongolian and Zhuang.

In my hometown Xinjiang, for example, the Xinjiang People's Broadcasting Station currently broadcasts 12 programs in five languages, namely Chinese, Uyghur, Kazakh, Mongolian, and Kyrgyz. Elementary and middle schools in Xinjiang offer a wide range of courses in minority languages including Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Mongolian, and Xibe. Walking on the streets of Xinjiang, you can find Uyghur signage in various public areas, such as stores, healthcare facilities, and transportation facilities. As a Uyghur who grew up in Beijing, I can still fluently communicate in Uyghur. This also reflects the state's commitment to safeguarding the rights of all ethnic groups to use and develop their own spoken and written languages.

Language is the bridge of communication. China encourages minority communities to learn the national standard spoken and written language. This does not conflict with safeguarding the rights of all ethnic groups to use their own

languages. Neither should it be misconstrued as an attempt to eradicate the language and culture of any ethnic group. The popularization of the national standard language will contribute to promoting the interaction and communication among various ethnic groups as well as fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. Similarly, most of us choose to communicate in English during this Forum, to ensure that our ideas are better understood by more people.