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Madame Chair

The Forum on minority issues provides an important occasion for exchange among a wide range of person and institutions concerned about minority rights protection which I think all of us are grateful for having. I am here to introduce **the contents and structure** of one significant **practical and concrete** result of the **Sino-Norwegian** cooperation on minority rights - **The Beijing-Oslo Recommendations on the Protection of the Rights of Linguistic Minorities**.

Minority language use is a prerequisite for effective participation and it is a main **instrumental** element for guaranteeing the effective participation of minorities in public life.

The draft recommendations of the 2009 session of the Forum on Minority Issues bring out the importance of minority language use for effective political participation of minorities. The Beijing-Oslo Recommendations address minority language use in a wide range of areas relevant to the effective political participation of minorities. I would like to mention Chapter VII minority language use in **elections**, Chapter 3 in **state organs**, legislative or administrative, Chapter 12 in **institutions and mechanisms providing remedies** in case of violations of the rights of minorities, and Chapter 9 in the **media**.

Based on the recognition of a number of general principles and rules in **international human rights** instruments, including non-discrimination, minority rights and the effective participation of minorities in public life, a **“pick and choose menu”** system is used for the structure of the Beijing-Oslo Recommendations. This structure provides **alternatives for policy and law** in a wide range of situations, taking into account **the practice in different countries**, such as China and Norway. This morning the representative of Norway addressed some of the relevant Norwegian practice.

This structure is chosen in order to accommodate for the large diversity in languages and situations of languages. It should provide specific alternatives based on general principles. Some advantages of this structure are

- avoiding a too general wording to have any real practical input, **and**
- to go beyond minimum standards

The Beijing-Oslo Recommendations were drafted responding to the multiple and common challenges to the languages and cultures of linguistic minorities worldwide.

It is our hope that the **Beijing-Oslo Recommendations on the Protection of the Rights of Linguistic Minorities** may have a **practical value** to the **effective participation of different stakeholders** in discussing, formulating and implementing law and policy relating to the rights of linguistic minorities, promoted by the draft recommendations of the 2009 session of the Forum on Minority Issues and the Independent Expert.

Thank you, Madame Chair for the opportunity to present at this Forum.

The Beijing-Oslo Recommendations takes as their bases the following principles and rules.

- Respect of personal freedom and dignity
- Non-discrimination
- Minority rights
- Effective participation in public life
- Autonomy of the group
- Mutual respect and learning and exchanging from each other
- Special measures and financial assistance
- Effective remedies
- Equal value of all languages
- Protection of intangible cultural heritage and human cultural diversity

The Beijing-Oslo Recommendations on the Protection of the Rights of Linguistic Minorities.

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