

Fourth Session of the Forum on Minority Issues

Guaranteeing the rights of minority women

Thank you Ms. Chair for giving me opportunity to speak. I speak on behalf of the Public Association the "Institute for Regional Studies" in the Kyrgyz Republic.

After last year's ethnic conflict between predominantly the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities, the State and NGOs have been taking full measures to improve the situation, including greater respect for minority rights to alleviate tensions between different ethnic groups. For example, this year there has been developed a 'Concept on Ethnic Politics and the Consolidation of Society of the Kyrgyz Republic and Plan of Action'. However, I would like to raise attention to the problems faced by minority women, which do not receive much attention.

It is common that the rights of minority women are associated with the continued presence of entrenched gender roles, so the problems faced by minority women remain unnoticed and appropriate measures to eliminate these problems have not been developed.

For example, it is the practice of some ethnic minority parents to want their daughters to marry at an early age, before they are able to finish school and get a certificate of basic education. This fact is not giving them the opportunity to continue studying, improve education, to be aware of and actively participate in economic life, to have access to labor markets and have full participation in social, cultural and political life.

Therefore minority women take less participation in politics than men. Women realize their potential in public life (NGOs) or working in social institutions: schools, kindergartens, hospitals.

In this regard, I consider that paragraphs 51 and 35 of the draft recommendations with respect to guaranteeing the rights of minority women, if implemented in the Kyrgyz Republic would contribute to solving the problem of minority women in access to education.

Specifically I recommend

- a need to develop schemes of adult education in the interests of minority women that are not in school
- that international and national institutions and NGOs pay serious attention to the problems of minority women.

The outgoing year was not easy for Kyrgyzstan, but due to the solidarity of the people in Kyrgyzstan, headed by the first woman president in Central Asia – Roza Otunbaeva, we were able to consolidate and start to take necessary measures to create equal conditions for all the citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, regardless of gender and ethnicity.

Thank you all for your kind attention.