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Statement by
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On the occasion of the
Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education
Third Committee of the General Assembly Agenda Item 74:
Promotion and protection of human rights

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Mr Chair,

We thank Special Rapporteur Ms Koumbou Boly Barry for her report and presentation. Hungary attaches great importance to your work and firmly supports your mandate.

Today, we would like to highlight a crucial aspect of the right to education: the education of minorities and, more specifically, the right of national minorities to receive education in their mother tongue, which has proven to lead to better outcomes for children, and is, therefore, a stepping stone to their social inclusion and future success in all fields of life.

The Hungarian Government is firmly committed to promoting and protecting the right of minorities to education in their mother tongue. The Hungarian Fundamental Law grants this right to national minorities living in Hungary, and the 2011 Act on the Rights of Nationalities clarifies and extends the individual and collective rights of persons belonging to one of the thirteen indigenous nationality communities of Hungary.

The framework of nationality education was established in close cooperation with the representative bodies of nationalities, and is part of the Hungarian public education. Schools and kindergartens play a prominent role in preserving and transferring the nationality language and culture to future generations.

Madam Rapporteur,

The right to mother-tongue education for minorities is a fundamental right recognized in international human rights instruments. In this regard, we have to refer to the alarming developments concerning Ukraine's policies on the education of minority languages, and to express the Hungarian Government's serious concerns on the new Ukrainian Education Act, and especially Article 7 of the Act, aimed at narrowing down already existent minority rights related to education in minority languages. The new legislation has generated numerous debates and raised concerns in the past months, and we believe that the implementation of such a law is an unacceptable step.

Madam Rapporteur,

In your report, you focus on education for refugees – and we are deeply concerned by the alarmingly high number of persons belonging to minorities who had to flee their homes due to persecution and conflict. I am inspired by your comment that education “can break the cycle of conflict, promote peace and reconciliation, teach tolerance and conflict resolution and help to build a better future for children and young people”.

Could you please give your insights on how minority education benefits societies as a whole?

Thank you very much.