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Russian Federation

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I. Methodology

1. This national report was prepared by the Ministry of Justice as part of the second cycle of the universal periodic review, on the basis of material provided by the competent executive bodies, the Social Forum, the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) and the Commissioner for Children's Rights.
2. The report describes the outcome of continuing efforts to strengthen the statutory and structural underpinnings for the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the Russian Federation, and the results of putting into effect the recommendations accepted by Russia as voluntary undertakings at the conclusion of the discussion of its first national report.
3. During the preparation of the report, consultations with NGOs were held in November 2012; these were attended by senior members of the federal Notary Chamber and Bar Association and representatives of non-commercial organizations such as the All-Russia Society of Disabled People, the Association of Russian Jurists, the Russian Peace Fund, the Interregional Charitable Fund for Assistance to Prisoners, the Moscow Human Rights Bureau, the Institute for Civil Society Problems and the National Fund for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

II. Statutory underpinnings for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms

A. Constitutional safeguards and international legal obligations to uphold and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms (recommendations Nos. 7, 14, 19–21, 33)

4. Russia is a democratic, federative, law-based State with a republican form of government, and comprises constituent entities with equal rights.
5. According to article 2 of the Constitution, the individual and individual rights and freedoms are supreme values. The State is required to acknowledge, uphold and protect human and civil rights and freedoms. Section II of the Constitution is entirely devoted to human and civil rights and liberties, and establishes a long list of benefits that are subject to preservation. Fundamental rights are inalienable, belong to all people from birth, and are directly enforceable. Rights and liberties are acknowledged and safeguarded in accordance with the generally recognized principles and standards of international law.
6. Under the Constitution, international agreements to which the Russian Federation is party, like the generally recognized principles and standards of international law, take precedence over domestic legislation.
7. Russia is party to the overwhelming majority of the basic universal international human rights agreements, and intends to extend, gradually and with due regard for the financial implications and the need to amend domestic legislation and practice, the range of its international obligations in the human rights domain.
8. In the past few years the Russian Federation has ratified or become party to the following international human rights agreements.

9. In 2009, Russia ratified the European Social Charter; in 2010 it ratified Protocol No. 14 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the purpose of which is to reform the European Court of Human Rights.
10. In 2011, Russia acceded to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.
11. In 2012, Russia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
12. Also in 2012, Russia acceded to the Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children.
13. That same year, the Russian Federation signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.
14. Special representatives of the United Nations Secretary-General and rapporteurs for the United Nations special procedures and Human Rights Council have made official visits in the past few years as follows: the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, in 2009; the Special Representative on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, in 2010; the Special Representative on violence against children in 2011, and the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights in 2012.
15. The Russian authorities continue to work closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The High Commissioner, Ms. N. Pillay, visited the Russian Federation in 2011. Russia has been making annual voluntary contributions of US\$ 2 million to the OHCHR budget since 2006.
16. The Russian Federation has been working actively with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances since its establishment. It diligently investigates every disappearance and forwards the related material to the Working Group. It intends to continue cooperating closely with this international machinery.

B. Institutional human rights mechanisms (recommendations Nos. 11, 15–17)

17. The Russian authorities are still working steadily to improve and strengthen human rights institutions.
18. The protection of human rights is a matter for the legislative, executive and judicial branches of power. The President of the Russian Federation is the guarantor of the Constitution and of human and civil rights.
19. With a view to the further development of an institutional human rights structure, commissioners for children's rights and for the rights of entrepreneurs have been set up within the Office of the President of the Federation in 2009 and 2012, respectively, to function alongside the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman). Regional commissioners for human rights have been established in 67 constituent entities of the Federation; commissioners for children's rights have been established in 83.

20. In keeping with the Russian authorities' policy of expanding the scope for cooperation between civil and State institutions, the creation of an "open government" system was initiated in 2012. The activities of the federal Social Forum and civil boards attached to the organs of power are helping to intensify constructive dialogue between society and those in authority.

21. There is, besides, within the Office of the President of the Federation, a Council on the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights comprising representatives of the most authoritative NGOs and independent experts.

22. Under a Presidential Decree, No. 601 of 7 May 2012 entitled "Principal thrust of efforts to improve the system of State government", the federal authorities are required to publish information about proposed legislation that is being formulated and the outcome of public discussion on that legislation.

23. In April 2011, the President approved the Fundamentals of State Policy on the promotion of legal literacy and awareness among the general public, which are intended to help improve knowledge of the law generally and foster the development of civil society.

24. Independent bar and notarial associations are in operation in the Russian Federation.

25. A law on free legal assistance took effect in January 2012; this establishes State guarantees to ensure citizens can exercise their right to obtain qualified legal assistance free of charge throughout the Russian Federation.

26. The number of cases going through the courts that relate to citizens' complaints about irregular decisions and actions on the part of authorities and officials continues to grow. The courts heard and ruled on over 58,900 such cases in 2008; in 2011, they dealt with over 141,000. According to court statistics, more than 60 per cent of complaints against the actions of officials are upheld, as are more than 70 per cent of appeals against decisions by executive and governmental bodies.

27. Under article 46, paragraph 3, of the Constitution, anyone is entitled, pursuant to the international agreements to which the Russian Federation is party, to apply to international human rights bodies if all available domestic judicial remedies have been exhausted. Availing themselves of this right, some 12,400 citizens lodged complaints against the Federation at the European Court of Human Rights in 2011. Even so, the number of complaints against the Federation that are currently before the European Court is tending to diminish.

28. With a view to further improvements in the Russian legal system, a Presidential Decree, No. 657, entitled "Monitoring the application of the law in the Russian Federation", was issued on 20 May 2011. This seeks the establishment of a single legal mechanism to produce consistent, well-founded legislation. As monitoring proceeds, specific proposals for changes in statutes in need of correction are formulated. Special attention is paid during this process to giving effect to the rulings of the federal Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights.

29. The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation was established in 2010 as a federal organ with plenipotentiary powers over criminal proceedings; it is independent of the federal organs of State power, the governmental organs of the constituent entities of the Federation, local government authorities, voluntary associations, organizations and other bodies. It has been in operation since 15 January 2011.

III. Developments in the protection of human rights and freedoms

Civil and political rights

A. Right to life. Action to counter extremism and terrorism (recommendations Nos. 22, 24, 25 and 42)

30. In accordance with the Constitution, everyone has the right to life.

31. Russia is continuing to observe a moratorium on the application of the death penalty as a form of criminal punishment. The ban on the imposition of the death penalty by the courts has been upheld by a Constitutional Court ruling, No. 1344-O-R of 19 November 2009. In essence, that decision finalizes the legal ban on such punishment in Russia.

32. Hence the Russian Federation is in full compliance with the basic obligation under the second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, even though it has not acceded to that Protocol.

33. The Russian Federation has a regulatory and organizational system of State action to counter terrorism and extremism, based on close cooperation among law-enforcement bodies, the State authorities and local government. Current federal law on terrorism and extremism is in keeping with the international obligations of the Russian Federation and requires no radical review.

34. Under the Criminal Code, that an offence is motivated by political, ideological, racial, ethnic or religious hatred or enmity, or by hatred or enmity towards any social group, is an aggravating circumstance.

35. Presidential Decree No. 988 of 26 July 2011 set up an interdepartmental commission to counter extremism, comprising representatives of the law-enforcement authorities, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and other government departments. Civil society institutions are actively recruited to help deal with problems arising from manifestations of extremism.

36. Standing interdepartmental counter-extremism coordination and analysis units have been set up in the Russian regions. Crime-fighting units have drawn up plans to prevent extremism and xenophobia and are taking action to cut off sources of finance for extremism.

37. The law-enforcement authorities are devoting particular attention to detecting and suppressing extremist offences. The number of such offences detected in 2011 was about 20 per cent higher than in 2009.

38. Keeping an eye on compliance with the law governing action to counter extremism is a priority for the procuratorial authorities. All criminal cases involving extremist offences are subject to special monitoring by local procurators and a special-purpose division of the Office of the Procurator-General.

39. Over 2011–2012, the law-enforcement authorities put out of action several dozen criminal groupings engaging in serious crime motivated by ethnic, racial and religious hatred. The members of those groupings have been prosecuted.

40. Contentious issues relating to judicial practice in criminal cases involving extremist offences have been clarified in a ruling by the Plenum of the Supreme Court, No. 11 of 28 June 2011.

41. In total, by September 2012 some 19 terrorist and 29 extremist organizations in Russia had been banned by court decision. Court rulings had added 1,405 titles to the federal list of extremist material.

C. Protection against torture, violence and other cruel or demeaning treatment (recommendations Nos. 4, 29 and 35)

42. The Constitution guarantees that no one is to be subjected to torture, violence, or other cruel or demeaning treatment or punishment.

43. Russia regularly hosts official visits by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture to check on conditions in detention. There have been 23 such visits in all by the European Committee since 1998, including 12 visits to the Northern Caucasus; this is significantly more than the number of official visits made to other Council of Europe countries.

44. The Russian authorities are working steadily to effect substantial changes that are helping to overcome the seclusion of military service and make it a more humane experience; this is having a beneficial effect on the psychological climate in military units and is helping to reduce crime and prevent lawbreaking among citizens undergoing military service.

Unlawful use of force by law-enforcement personnel (recommendation No. 29)

45. Under Russian criminal law, conduct such as the infliction of suffering and torture is a punishable offence. Article 117 of the Criminal Code gives a legal definition of torture that is precisely characterized, thus enabling the offence to be properly identified; in substance it corresponds to article 1 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

46. Where officials are implicated in offences falling within the definition of “torture” they can also be prosecuted under article 286 of the Criminal Code (“Exceeding authority”), which provides for a penalty of up to 10 years’ deprivation of liberty.

47. In 2009, the Plenum of the Supreme Court clarified the procedure for consideration by the courts of complaints from suspects and accused persons in detention and from prisoners about the conduct of staff at remand facilities and correctional institutions. This has enabled the courts to look at such cases in more detail.

48. A radical reform of the internal affairs authorities is taking place. After extensive public discussion, the Federal Act on the Police was passed in 2011; this establishes effective procedural safeguards to ensure that members of the police forces respect human rights and freedoms, and increases public surveillance of police activity. The new Act reaffirms the absolute ban on the use by the police of torture, violence or other cruel or degrading treatment.

49. In April 2012 the Ministry of Internal Affairs issued an order confirming a new procedure governing the way police officers must comply with their rights and responsibilities when bringing citizens into a police station. The order spells out in detail the sequence of actions to be followed by the officers concerned, and establishes safeguards to ensure detainees’ rights are respected.

50. In 2012, the Ministry set up a hotline for use by citizens reporting crimes and other wrongdoing committed by internal affairs personnel.

51. The law-enforcement authorities have significantly broadened the ways in which they cooperate with human rights organizations, the mass media and representatives of

society. In the interests of openness and in order to ensure that unlawful conduct by law-enforcement authorities does not go unpunished, detention facilities are regularly checked by visiting committees, established pursuant to the Federal Act on Civil Monitoring of Respect for Human Rights and Aid for Persons in Places of Detention.

52. The Act empowers committee members to visit places of detention without special permission, and to talk with detainees about issues relating to the exercise of their rights. At present, visiting committees are in operation in 79 regions of Russia. Together, their members number over 700. In 2011 and the first six months of 2012, the committees carried out more than 2,400 visits to places of detention, conducting more than 9,000 conversations with the citizens detained there and accepting more than 1,700 appeals which were later investigated.

53. In March 2011, with a view to stricter monitoring of respect for human rights in places of imprisonment, the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) and the Federal Penal Enforcement Service signed a joint undertaking to set up a working group that would coordinate the activities of the two entities relating to the observance of detainees' rights.

54. Cooperative arrangements are also in place between the Ombudsman's office and visiting committees, on the one hand, and the division of national human rights structures, penitentiary institutions and police at the Directorate General for Human Rights and Rule of Law at the Council of Europe, on the other.

55. There is a special unit within the Investigative Committee for the investigation of criminal cases relating to torture and other cruel treatment of detainees and citizens in places of imprisonment. This is to counter cruelty on the part of the staff of the law-enforcement authorities.

56. The Investigative Committee conducts in the order of 3,000 checks yearly into reports of cruel treatment on the part of penal enforcement personnel. Altogether 21 prosecutions were brought in 2010 as a result of its consideration of such reports; 30 prosecutions were brought in 2011.

57. The monitoring of respect for detainees' rights attracts particular attention from the law-enforcement authorities in the Northern Caucasus federal district. Between 1 January and 10 September 2012 alone, the procuratorial authorities carried out 444 checks to ensure the law was being respected in remand facilities and correctional institutions in the district, and issued 191 instructions to remedy breaches that they discovered.

Conditions in detention (recommendations Nos. 4 and 35)

58. The Russian authorities are taking consistent action to improve the situation of individuals in custody. The Government has approved a master plan for the development of the penal enforcement system in Russia up to the year 2020 and a federal programme for the development of the system over the period from 2007 to 2016. Both of these call for large-scale reform to bring the sector into line with established international standards.

59. There are plans to build 26 new remand facilities meeting all international standards in 24 constituent entities of the Russian Federation, together accommodating 17,707 inmates. There are also plans to build and reconstruct wings accommodating 17,367 inmates at existing remand centres.

60. Some 9,300 additional places have already been added and brought into use at existing remand centres since the programme has been in operation. As a result, the amount of sanitary space available for each detainee now averages, across Russia as a whole, more than the 4 square metres established as the standard under Russian legislation.

61. Steps have also been taken to house first offenders separately from convicts who have been in prison before.

C. Right to liberty and inviolability of the person (recommendation No. 30)

62. The Russian authorities are steadily refining the law and judicial practice so as to reduce the numbers held in remand centres before trial on criminal charges or serving court-imposed sentences in places of imprisonment.

63. Article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure was amended in April 2010 so that detention in custody as a pretrial measure could not be applied to individuals accused of many of the economic crimes defined in the Criminal Code.

64. Corrections have also been made to articles 106 (bail) and 107 (house arrest), markedly broadening the scope for the use of these measures.

65. The number of individuals that the courts agree to remand in custody has fallen significantly. The courts issued 187,800 detention orders in 2009, but 135,900 in 2011. In other words, the number of people detained in custody during preliminary investigations has diminished since 2009 by 27.7 per cent – an indication of a more measured approach on the part of the investigating authorities and the courts towards the use of detention.

66. Amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure that took effect in December 2010 allow a milder measure to be substituted for remand in custody in the event of a suspect or accused person's being diagnosed with an illness serious enough to hinder remand. Further to these amendments, the Government of Russia endorsed a list of qualifying illnesses on 14 December 2011.

67. At the same time, the process of making criminal punishment a more humane affair in Russia continues.

68. A new form of punishment has been in use since 2010, one that does not involve segregation from society: a restriction on freedom consisting in the imposition on a convict of an obligation to comply with certain restrictions (not to leave the house at certain times, not to change address, or place of work or study without the consent of the competent State body, etc.). Between January 2010 and the end of June 2012, penalties of this kind were imposed on roughly 36,000 offenders.

69. Beginning in 2014, there are plans to introduce yet another new form of punishment: punitive labour, to be performed by convicts at specially built correctional centres. This will be an alternative to imprisonment. It will help to bring down still further the numbers of convicts given custodial sentences.

70. Amendments made to the Criminal Code in March 2011 removed minimum custodial sentences from over 100 articles; they also introduced, for some offences, penalties not requiring segregation from society. The approval of these changes has enabled the courts to impose shorter prison terms and make more extensive use of non-custodial penalties.

71. A law amending the Criminal Code broadened the categories of offence regarded as minor or of average severity in December 2011. It also allowed courts to substitute lesser charges, and made provision for individuals committing certain economic offences for the first time to be exonerated from criminal liability if they had made good the damage they had caused.

72. As a result of these measures, the number of people sentenced to prison terms in 2011 was 227,050 (29 per cent of all convictions), while 289,202 people were sentenced to prison terms in 2009 (32.4 per cent of all convictions).

73. The number of women sentenced to prison is also tending to decline. Altogether 20,783 women were sentenced to prison terms in 2011 (compared with 27,370 in 2009), representing 17.7 per cent (compared with 20.1 per cent in 2009) of all women found guilty over the year.

74. It is increasingly rare for women to be remanded in custody during pretrial investigations. Some 14,394 women were remanded in custody in 2009; 9,153 were in 2011. More than 70 per cent of these were women accused of serious or particularly serious offences. In most cases, moreover, the courts will not extend custody for women. In 2011, the courts approved only 3,966 out of 11,051 applications (35.9 per cent) to extend the period of time women were held on remand.

75. A ruling by the Plenum of the Supreme Court, No. 22 of 29 October 2009, requires courts to be particularly attentive when considering remand in custody for women with minor children. When faced with an application for remand in such circumstances, the court must have at its disposal information to the effect that the children will be cared for by close relatives or other persons, or housed in a children's institution.

76. Extensive use is made of the device provided for in article 82 of the Criminal Code whereby, in the case of pregnant women and women with children aged under 14, punishment is deferred until the child reaches the age of 14. The purpose of this is, first, to protect the rights of the child and ensure it receives a good upbringing. Under article 82, however, when the child reaches 14 the court can exempt the woman from serving sentence or the remaining part of her sentence and expunge the conviction, or substitute a milder penalty for the remaining part of the sentence.

77. On 1 January 2012 the penal enforcement inspectorate rosters listed 7,750 women who had benefited from deferment of penalty. In conjunction with local care and foster agencies, the inspectorates check to ensure that the terms of deferment are being respected, and in particular that the convicted women are honouring their obligation to bring up and care for their children. If those terms are not respected, steps are taken to protect the children's rights.

D. Countering trafficking in persons (recommendation No. 34)

78. The Russian authorities are continuing to take national and international action to combat trafficking in persons in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the related Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

79. The Commonwealth of Independent States has adopted model laws to counter trafficking in persons and to provide assistance to the victims of trafficking, together with recommendations on the unification and harmonization of member States' legislation on the subject. The model laws are based on international experience in tackling such criminal activity and encompass the entire spectrum of action – prevention, detection, discovery and suppression of actual crimes, punishment of the culprits and assistance for victims.

80. The Russian authorities are putting into effect the CIS Programme of Cooperation in countering trafficking in persons 2011–2013. The Office of the Procurator-General pools information and experience on the subject and arranges working meetings and visits to problematic border areas under an agreement on cooperation among the offices of the procurators-general in the CIS countries.

E. Right to a fair trial (recommendations Nos. 35–38)

81. The exercise of judicial power and administration of justice in the Russian Federation are governed by the Constitution and other regulatory acts. Russia complies rigorously with international standards governing the administration of justice while striving to maximize protection for human rights and liberties.

Reform of the judicial system (recommendations Nos. 35–37)

82. The Russian authorities are conducting a reform of the judicial system to improve the quality and efficiency of case-handling in the courts and the execution of judicial decisions, and to boost public confidence in the administration of justice.

83. The Federal Constitutional Act on the Ordinary Courts in the Russian Federation was passed in February 2011. This laid the legal and organizational groundwork for the system of ordinary courts to function. Steps — regulatory and organizational — have also been taken to optimize and harmonize the system of judicial bodies in various jurisdictions, including the introduction at ordinary courts of an appeal body for every category of case. The appeals bodies have been operating while ordinary courts hear civil cases since 2012, and while the courts hear criminal cases, since 2013.

84. An Act passed in December 2011 established within the commercial court system a Court of Intellectual Rights; this allows disputes in this important area of social relations to be dealt with to optimum effect.

85. In keeping with Federal Acts Nos. 193 and 194 of 27 July 2010, arrangements have been made for the use in Russian judicial practice of an alternative procedure for settling disputes – independent mediation.

86. Under amendments made to the Code of Civil Procedure in December 2010, a finding by the European Court of Human Rights that the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms has been violated may afford grounds for a review of a decision in the light of changed circumstances. Analogous articles in the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Code of Commercial Procedure also allow for this possibility.

87. A Federal Act of 30 April 2010, No. 68-FZ, provides for indemnifying safeguards, guaranteeing citizens the right to go to trial within a reasonable period and the right to performance within a reasonable period of a judicial decision levying funds from the resources of the federal budget system. Failure to act within reasonable periods constitutes grounds for the award of fair monetary compensation. The effectiveness of this legal defence mechanism is attested to by numerous examples in Russian judicial practice and has been acknowledged by the European Court of Human Rights.

88. As part of the drive for public and open courts, a Federal Act on Access to Information about the Activities of the Courts in the Russian Federation came into effect on 1 July 2010. This guarantees that any interested individuals can have access to information of interest to them relating to the work of the Russian judicial system and its staff.

89. Information on cases before the ordinary courts, the commercial courts and the Constitutional Court, and the texts of judicial rulings, are made available on Internet sites.

90. To enshrine the principle of the independence of the judiciary, the Status of Judges Act was amended in July 2009 to do away with the initial appointment of a federal judge for a three-year term. The amended text allows initial appointments to be of indefinite duration, thus significantly broadening the effect of the principle that judges cannot be dismissed, which is a guarantee of their independence.

91. The Federal Act on Ordinary Courts has also been amended, removing the age limit for tenure of the position of Supreme Court President and allowing vice-presidents of the Court to be appointed more than once.

92. On the question of the independence of the judiciary, on 20 July 2011 the Constitutional Court issued a decision, No. 19-P, finding that statutory language allowing criminal proceedings to be brought against judges on the strength of indications of an offence under article 305 of the Criminal Code (issuance of a knowingly unjust sentence, decision or other judicial ruling) is unconstitutional if the judicial ruling which a judge is charged with issuing has become enforceable and has not been set aside in the manner established in procedural law.

93. In decision No. 9-P of 20 April 2010, the Constitutional Court determined that a judge could not be disciplined by premature termination of appointment for committing a legal mistake if he or she was acting within the limits of judicial appreciation and committed no gross errors in applying substantive or procedural law that would render his or her continuing exercise of judicial authority untenable.

94. To prevent judges from engaging in corruption, the Status of Judges Act has been amended to include the notion of conflict of interest; if there is a conflict of interest, a judge may not take part in the consideration of a case. A requirement has also been introduced that judges must declare their income, property and property obligations.

95. Amendments were made to procedural law in June 2010, establishing a procedure for staffing courts with due regard for caseload and judges' specializations while preventing individuals with an interest in the outcome of any judicial proceedings from influencing the staffing; the procedure includes the use of an automated computer system.

96. The Federal Constitutional Act on Judicial Disciplinary Presence was passed in November 2009; this establishes an ad hoc disciplinary body, comprising justices of the Supreme Court and the High Commercial Court, to hear appeals against decisions by qualification boards to terminate judges' appointments prematurely.

Consideration of cases against juveniles (recommendation No. 38)

97. Whether special (juvenile) courts should be created in Russia to administer justice to minors is a question that has been painstakingly discussed in the legislature. It has been concluded that, for the time being, there is merit in developing juvenile justice methods with support from the national judicial institutions already in existence.

98. Current criminal and criminal procedural law is based on the norms and principles of international law on juvenile justice, and provides effective guarantees of heightened protection for the rights of minors.

99. The Criminal Code (section V, arts. 87–96) establishes a series of material distinctive features in relation to the criminal liability of minors. A person aged under 14 years at the time of committing an offence cannot be held criminally liable. Under article 89 of the Code, when a penalty is imposed on a minor, due account must be taken of his or her living conditions, upbringing, level of psychological development and other personal characteristics, together with the influence on him or her of older persons. Being of minor age is regarded as a mitigating circumstance.

100. Further, in accordance with article 90 of the Code, a minor who commits a petty or minor offence may be exonerated from criminal liability if it is accepted that correction can be brought about by means of compulsory re-education measures.

101. Chapter 50 (arts. 420–432) and other parts of the Code of Criminal Procedure specify particular features that proceedings in criminal cases involving minors must

display. The right to a defence, when exercised by a minor defendant, allows for the possibility of the investigation and consideration of the case being attended by the minor's legal representatives in addition to defence counsel (a lawyer): the representatives are allowed access from the moment when the minor is first questioned as a suspect or accused person.

102. When suspects under 16 years of age are questioned, an educator or psychologist must be present. When cases involving minors are heard in court, the special judicial procedure whereby if the accused accepts the charges laid there is no need to conduct a judicial examination may not be applied.

103. In October 2009 the Russian Judges' Council set up a working group on the creation, introduction and development of juvenile justice machinery within the Russian judicial system. The group is expected to foster the incorporation into Russian court practice of international legal standards relating to cases involving minors, and to support collaboration with civil society institutions as the requisite changes are made.

104. Ordinary courts in 52 constituent entities of the Russian Federation are currently using juvenile justice methods in their work.

105. With a view to standardizing practice in cases involving juvenile crime, in February 2011 the Plenum of the Supreme Court issued a decision "On judicial practice in the application of the law governing particular features of criminal liability and punishment as they relate to minors". The Plenum drew the attention of the lower courts to the requirement that, besides upholding domestic criminal and criminal procedure law, they must also take account of the relevant international legal agreements when considering criminal cases involving minors. If an international agreement to which the Russian Federation is party establishes rules different from those laid down in Russian legislation, the courts must, pursuant to article 1, part 3, of the Code of Criminal Procedure, apply the rules established by the international agreement.

106. In keeping with the position taken by the Plenum, cases involving minors are supposed to be taken by the most experienced judges. A specialization in juvenile cases implies, for judges, that they must establish a level of professional competence through tuition and retraining not only on points of law but also on matters of pedagogics, sociology, youth psychology, criminology, victimology and the use of the juvenile justice methods applied within the framework of procedural law.

F. Right to respect for privacy (recommendation No. 41)

107. According to the Constitution, the State upholds the dignity of the individual. Nothing may afford grounds for belittling that dignity. Everyone is entitled to inviolability of their private life, personal and family secrets, and to defend their honour and good name.

108. The courts hear over 5,000 civil suits for protection of individuals' honour, dignity and business reputations every year.

109. At the same time, the law-enforcement authorities are devoting more and more attention to the investigation of cases relating to breaches of the right to personal honour and dignity and other constitutional rights and freedoms. Twenty-two people were convicted for breaches of the inviolability of private life in 2011 (10 were in 2009), and 115 were convicted for violating the secrecy of correspondence, telephone calls or postal or other communications (as opposed to 67 in 2009).

110. Amendments made to the Code of Criminal Procedure in 2010 have clarified the procedure whereby citizens can claim compensation if they are rehabilitated in the course

of criminal proceedings; this has led to the creation of an effective mechanism for obtaining the requisite financial resources.

G. Right to freedom of movement, free choice of residence (recommendations Nos. 40 and 51)

111. Anyone lawfully within the Russian Federation has the right to circulate freely, select his or her place of residence, travel freely outside the borders and return unhindered.

112. Russia continues to use the notification method for registering residence, which guarantees the right to freedom of movement and choice of residence. The Act requiring citizens of the Federation to register their places of residence also specifies that registration or failure to register cannot constitute grounds for placing restrictions or conditions on citizens' exercise of their rights and liberties.

113. In 2012, the President endorsed a master plan on State migration policy up to the year 2025; this included provisions designed to bring about the adaptation and integration of foreign citizens into Russian society.

114. Advisory gatherings for foreign citizens on the principles underpinning Russian law on migration are held at multifunctional State and municipal service centres in all constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

115. The Russian authorities have stepped up international cooperation with the competent authorities in the CIS States over the conclusion of bilateral agreements setting up mechanisms for the organized recruitment of foreign labour.

116. In November 2008, Russia signed the Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers from CIS States and Members of their Families, which governs cooperation in the field of labour migration and the protection of migrant workers' rights.

117. Over 18,000 citizens and organizations were subjected to administrative proceedings in 2011 (about 10,000 were in 2009) for breaches of procedure when offering employment on Russian territory to foreign citizens.

H. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (recommendation No. 41)

118. The Constitution does not permit any religion to be established as the State or mandatory religion. Religious associations are separate from the State and equal before the law. Freedom of conscience, of religious belief, and equality of human and civil rights irrespective of attitude to religion or religious conviction are all guaranteed.

119. The concept of religious associations, the forms such associations may take, safeguards for their operation and guarantees that the State will not interfere with religious associations and vice versa are set out in the Federal Act on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations.

120. Religious organizations of 60 different confessions are currently registered and functioning in Russia. Not only duly registered religious organizations are entitled to operate without hindrance: religious groups not registered with the Government are, too.

121. As part of the commitments the Russian Federation assumed upon becoming a member of the Council of Europe, in 2010 an Act was passed governing the procedure whereby items of religious significance in the possession of the State or municipalities can be transferred to religious organizations.

122. Current legislation allows for civilian service to be performed as an alternative to military service if military service would be counter to a citizen's convictions or religious faith.

123. Since 2012, a course on "Foundations of religious cultures and secular ethics" has been an obligatory part of the curriculum for fourth-year schoolchildren. The course is taught by secular teachers and is designed to impart knowledge of different cultures, not theology. The intention is that studying this subject should help to foster a tolerant attitude towards representatives of other cultures and improve inter-ethnic relations.

I. Freedom to express opinions (recommendations Nos. 43–47, 50)

124. The Constitution guarantees every citizen freedom of speech. No one may be forced to express or renounce his or her opinions and convictions. Everyone has the right freely to seek, obtain, transfer, produce and disseminate information by any legitimate means.

125. Under a Federal Act passed in 2009 governing access to information on the activities of central and local government bodies, detailed information, including drafts of regulatory acts in preparation, is constantly posted on the official sites of government departments.

126. Everyone is entitled to approach State bodies, local government bodies and officials free of charge, inter alia to criticize the body or official concerned. The Act regulating the consideration of citizens' reports and complaints was amended in 2010 to allow for the submission of reports and complaints in electronic form and set shorter deadlines for responding to certain submissions.

127. The official Internet site of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Russian Federation gives information on how to make submissions to international human rights bodies, provides sample complaints and offers the texts of international human rights agreements. Everyone has the opportunity to acquaint themselves with this information.

128. The issue of human rights and liberties is reflected in the curricula for middle schools and higher educational institutions. A course entitled "Human Rights" is taught at 40 such higher institutions in Russia. Some institutions run special courses on human rights.

129. Freedom of mass information is guaranteed. Censorship is prohibited. Altogether, over 88,000 mass media outlets — printed and electronic — are in operation in the Russian Federation.

130. Pursuant to a Presidential Decree, No. 455 of 17 April 2012, work is currently in progress on the launch of an independent television channel, "Russian Public Television", to broaden the range of reliable, comprehensive information available to citizens.

131. The Federal Act on Guarantees of Equality of Coverage of Parliamentary Parties by the State-run Free-to-Air Radio and Television Channels took effect in 2009. This institutionalizes the principle that equal amounts of information are to be aired about the activities of each parliamentary party.

132. The rights and legitimate interests of journalists are protected, in part by the relevant units of the Ministry of Communications and the Mass Media, which looks into every incident where journalists are hindered in going about their business, where information is withheld, or where journalists are attacked. Between January 2010 and the end of September 2012, 85 incidents involving attempts to impinge upon the professional independence of the mass news media and violations of journalists' rights were investigated. Seventeen of these related to attempts upon journalists' lives and health.

133. A hotline for editors and reporters has been opened on the Ministry site. Information about obstruction of journalists' legitimate activities is being pooled in collaboration with the Glasnost Defence Foundation.

134. The Russian law-enforcement authorities keep a particular eye on crimes against journalists.

135. Following the successful investigation of the murder in January 2009 of lawyer S.Y. Markelov and A.E. Baburova, the freelance *Novaya Gazeta* correspondent, Moscow Municipal Court found N.A. Tikhonov and E.D. Khasis guilty of the crime on 6 May 2011. The two were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. The court found that the murder was connected with Markelov's professional work to protect the rights of citizens supporting anti-fascist ideology. Baburova, who was with Markelov when he was murdered, was killed because she had witnessed the crime.

136. In their investigation of the murder in October 2006 of *Novaya Gazeta* commentator A.S. Politkovskaya, the investigating organs have charged six individuals, one of whom has made a full admission of his guilt and is cooperating actively with the investigation to establish the true facts of the affair.

137. The law-enforcement authorities are investigating the abduction and murder in July 2009 of human rights defender H.K. Estemirova. They have questioned more than 1,300 witnesses, conducted over 100 judicial evaluations and looked into over 4,000 submissions from individual citizens and organizations. An international warrant has been put out for the presumed culprit.

138. The investigation into the attack on the *Kommersant* reporter O.V. Kashin in November 2010 continues. According to the primary hypothesis being worked on by the law-enforcement authorities, the reason for the attack was Kashin's professional activity as a journalist.

J. Right to freedom of association (recommendation No. 42)

139. Under article 30 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to associate, including the right to form trade unions for the protection of their interests. Voluntary associations are guaranteed freedom to act.

140. There is provision in legislation for more than 20 different forms of non-commercial organization, including voluntary associations, religious organizations and branches of international and foreign non-commercial NGOs.

141. There are at present more than 201,000 non-commercial organizations registered in Russia, of which almost 50 per cent are voluntary associations and over 10 per cent are religious. The number of newly constituted voluntary associations continues to grow.

142. There are 245 subsidiaries and offices of international organizations and foreign, non-commercial NGOs in operation in Russia.

143. Non-commercial NGOs helping to develop civil society institutions receive financial support every year in the form of grants for carrying out socially significant projects, in accordance with instructions issued by the President of the Russian Federation. More than 4 billion roubles was disbursed from the federal budget for such purposes over the period 2009–2012.

144. Amendments made in April 2012 to the Federal Act on Political Parties have substantially eased the requirements for parties to be founded and function. In particular, the new wording reduces the number of party members required for registration from 40,000 to 500. Requirements relating to the numbers of political party members in regional

branches have been dropped. The frequency with which parties must submit accounts and those accounts must be verified by the Ministry of Justice has been extended from one to three years.

145. Forty political parties and 1,810 regional branches were registered as of 1 October 2012.

146. Amendments have also been made to the Elections to the State Duma Act. The threshold that a party must pass in order to be allocated seats in the Duma has been reduced from 7 to 5 per cent of the votes cast in an election. Additionally, a change in the law that took effect on 1 June 2012 means that the most senior officials in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation are now elected directly by citizens of the Federation.

K. Right to freedom of assembly (recommendations Nos. 42 and 49)

147. Russian law guarantees the right to assemble peacefully and unarmed, to hold gatherings, political rallies, demonstrations and marches and to picket. The right to conduct public events, which is established in the Constitution, is an important aspect of involvement by citizens and associations of citizens in managing the affairs of State. The Federal Act on Assemblies, Rallies, Demonstrations, Marches and Picketing calls for notification to be given of a public event in the interests of public order; concretely, this means that the organizer of a public event is required to give the executive or local government body of the constituent entity concerned notice that a public event is to take place.

148. In accordance with amendments made to the Act in June 2012, the executive or local government body may withhold consent for the event to take place only if notice is given by someone who, under the Act, is not entitled to organize a public event, or if the designated venue for the event is somewhere where, under the Act, public events are banned.

149. Also in accordance with the amendments, regional authorities have been given the power to set aside special areas for mass public assemblies where open expression can be given to public sentiment without previously notifying the authorities.

150. Further guarantees of the right to freedom of assembly are given in a Constitutional Court Decision, No. 12-P of 18 May 2012, and a ruling, No. 705-O-O of 1 June 2010.

IV. Social, cultural and economic rights

A. Right to social security (recommendations Nos. 26, 53 and 54)

151. The most important pointers followed in designing and carrying out national strategy for social security and improving the welfare of the population are the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

152. By the end of 2011 the Russian economy was emerging from the aftermath of the economic crisis, displaying steady growth in industrial output and gross domestic product. The State was fully assuming all its social obligations. Further, wages for workers in the budget-financed organizations had been increased by 13 per cent, the minimum wage had been raised, and the indexation rate for social benefits exceeded the rate of inflation. Pensions had also gone up significantly. No pensioner in Russia today has an income below the subsistence minimum.

153. Government employment policy during the crisis also bears a marked social stamp. The State took extra steps to provide support in this area, which encompassed more than 42.5 million individuals. As a result, overall unemployment in June 2012 had returned to its pre-crisis level of 4.4 million (5.8 per cent of the workforce).

154. As a result of the steps taken by the Russian authorities between 2007 and the end of 2011, the proportion of the population living on incomes below the absolute poverty threshold continued to fall, to 12.8 per cent (from 19.5 million in 2007 to 18.1 million in 2011). According to the All-Russian Population Census, 34,000 homeless households were identified in 2010. That is just 0.04 per cent of the population of the country. The figure has halved since 2002.

B. Protection of the rights of the family, children and women (recommendations Nos. 30, 32, 33 and 39)

155. Protecting the family and children is a constitutional duty of the Russian State. The associated relationships are governed by law in accordance with the principles laid down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in other international agreements to which the Russian Federation is party.

156. Children's ombudsmen exist at the federal level and in all constituent entities of the Federation; their activities are of great importance in coordinating the efforts of all the various players in the system of protection for children.

157. Every year, in accordance with article 22 of the Federal Act on Basic Guarantees of the Rights of the Child in the Russian Federation, the Government produces and distributes a State report on the status of children and families with children, so as to provide the authorities with objective, systematic, analytical information on the various issues involved. A Government decision of 28 March 2012, No. 248, calls for mandatory public discussion of the report.

158. A national strategy for action in children's interests covering the period 2012–2017 has been endorsed by Presidential Decree No. 761 of 1 June 2012. This sets the basic tasks and directions of State policy for promoting children's interests and defines key mechanisms for accomplishing them, based on the generally recognized norms and principles of international law.

159. In parallel, in the context of comprehensive programmes to improve the demographic situation within the country, the Russian authorities are hard at work to ward off the problem of child abandonment, develop a variety of means of settling children bereft of parental care in families, and amend the rules and regulations governing guardianship and foster care for minors.

160. Action taken over the past five years has laid the groundwork for an effective system to uphold a child's right to live and be brought up within a family. The number of children found to be lacking parental care over the course of a year has fallen by 35 per cent (127,000 in 2006, 82,200 in 2012). The number of parents deprived of parental rights has fallen by 19 per cent (62,800 in 2006, 50,700 in 2012). The number of children in orphanages has diminished by over 35 per cent (123,000 in 2006, 79,900 in 2012). The number of children listed in the State data bank as being bereft of parental care and in need of placement in a family is down by almost 29 per cent (177,000 in 2006, 126,000 in 2012).

161. Every constituent entity of the Federation has a system of material incentives for fostering children. The average maintenance payment per child in care or in a foster family was 6,600 roubles in 2011 (37 per cent more than in 2007), and the average remuneration for a foster parent was 9,000 roubles (59 per cent more than in 2007).

162. Improvements continue to be made to the procedure for selecting adoptive and foster parents. To that end, and in accordance with corrections made to the Family Code and the Code of Civil Procedure in November 2011, it is now mandatory that citizens wishing to take a child bereft of parental care into their families for upbringing must undergo training. There are at present 1,200 organizations that provide training and offer support to receiving families. By 2015, there are plans to establish a system of such services in every region.

163. Corrections to the Criminal Code have made the penalties for sexual crimes against minors significantly harsher. It is also now a crime to use minors in the production of pornographic material or articles (Criminal Code, art. 242.2).

164. At the same time, corrections to article 82 of the Criminal Code made in 2010 have established the possibility for convicted men as well as women to obtain a deferral of punishment until their child reaches the age of 14 years, in the interests of providing the child with the best possible upbringing. Altogether 223 men took advantage of this opportunity over the course of 2011, and another 245 did in the first seven months of 2012.

165. Violence towards women is a problem that receives constant attention from the authorities at all levels. Various kinds of proceedings, including criminal, are available under Russian law to respond to the use of violence in its various forms. There is language in the Criminal Code rendering punishable such conduct as offences against sexual inviolability, beatings, cruelty and the occasioning of physical or mental suffering.

166. The numbers of violent crimes in which women are the victims are tending to fall. Some 222,543 such crimes were recorded in 2009; 191,181 were in 2010; and 170,281 were in 2011.

167. The law-enforcement authorities conduct appropriate inquiries each time a violation of women's rights and legitimate interests is reported. The police keep an eye on individuals who commit domestic crime, chronic alcoholics, the mentally ill — people who pose an immediate risk to those around them — with a view to preventing such offences, and take timely preventive action.

168. Under a plan of action to give effect to the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the Russian authorities upon the conclusion of the Committee's consideration of the Federation's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports, a working group has been set up to draft a federal bill on prevention of violence in the family. Training seminars have been given for police officers and students at police academies, and recommendations to members of the law-enforcement authorities on how to prevent domestic violence have been drawn up.

169. With support from regional and local authorities, special services are being set up to prevent violence against women and offer timely help to women finding themselves in difficult living circumstances by providing effective, round-the-clock responses. Social security services operate multi-profile social assistance centres for families and children. These offer to all who need them a broad range of different social services, including psychological, legal, day-to-day and medical support for victims of violence. The number of such centres is constantly growing: there were over 3,000 by the beginning of 2012.

C. Right to education for those with special needs (recommendations Nos. 52 and 55)

170. Making the right to education a reality for those with special needs is a weighty aspect of State education policy in Russia. This is a particularly topical issue at present, given the ratification by Russia in 2012 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which imposes a series of obligations on national authorities, including

enabling persons with disabilities to pursue an education at all levels in an inclusive setting with a view to the fullest possible development of their human potential.

171. Under article 5 of the Education Act, the State must enable persons with special needs to receive an education, and must remedy disturbances in their development and social adaptation, by taking ad hoc pedagogical approaches. The State is currently looking into the possibility of arranging for children with special needs to be taught at ordinary, not remedial, schools as a priority in educational policy.

172. Almost 240,000 children with special needs attended ordinary State and municipal schools in the academic year 2011/12: that is 54 per cent of all special-needs children receiving an education, and 20,000 more than in 2010/11. Correspondingly, the number of children attending special (remedial) schools increased from 204,200 in 2010/11 to 207,300 in 2011/12.

173. Under the federal “Accessible environment” programme for 2011–2015, the State has set aside over 17.8 billion roubles for the construction of a network of educational institutions affording everything necessary for persons with special needs to study. There are also plans to upgrade the skills of 24,000 professional staff working in schools and psycho-medico-pedagogical commissions.

174. Account is taken in federal teaching standards of the specific requirements associated with teaching children with special needs; similar account is taken in the laws governing the certification of pupils’ achievements and the procedure for admission to middle and higher special educational institutions.

D. Prohibition of discrimination. Inter-ethnic relations (recommendations Nos. 22, 24, 27, 56 and 57)

175. Russian law prohibits restrictions of any kind on citizens’ rights on the basis of social, racial, sexual, ethnic, linguistic, religious or any other affiliation; it is thus impossible for a policy of discrimination against individual groups of citizens to emerge. There are administrative and criminal penalties for discrimination.

176. A Coordinating Committee on Gender Issues was set up at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security in 2011. In the course of its work, the Committee assembled the plan of action mentioned above to give effect to the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the Russian authorities upon the conclusion of the Committee’s consideration of the Federation’s combined sixth and seventh periodic reports.

177. The federative structure of the Russian Federation is based on the principle that the peoples of the Federation enjoy equal rights. The Constitution sets forth the basic rights of members of ethnic minorities and establishes safeguards for those rights, including the right to determine and declare their ethnic identity, the right to use their native languages and the right freely to choose the language in which they communicate, are brought up, educated and go about their affairs.

178. According to the 2010 All-Russian Population Census, there are 193 different ethnic groups living in Russia.

179. With a view to more harmonious inter-ethnic relations, the President of the Federation issued an edict in May 2012 entitled “Bringing about inter-ethnic concord”, pursuant to which a presidential council on inter-ethnic relations has been created and a strategy to guide State ethnic policy has been drafted.

180. An interdepartmental working group on inter-ethnic relations has been in operation since 2011, coordinating efforts to give effect to State ethnic policy and promote the distinctive cultural development of Russia's various ethnic groups. The membership of the group includes representatives of 15 federal executive bodies and both houses of parliament. The group's decisions are binding on federal executive bodies.

181. A plan of action to give effect to State ethnic policy was carried out in 2011–2012. A plan of action in mass communications with a view to more harmonious inter-ethnic relations in 2012–2013 is currently in progress. Additionally, a comprehensive plan for the socioeconomic and ethnic cultural development of gypsies in the Russian Federation over the period 2012–2013 has been adopted.

182. As part of efforts to build a solid institutional structure to support the creation of a climate of tolerance towards cultural and racial diversity in Russian society, new federal education standards in force since 1 January 2011 have broadened the general culture component of education; the objective of this is to foster a culture of inter-ethnic communication and positive exchange with representatives of different cultures and world religions.

183. The Russian authorities systematically provide financial support for mass media projects to advance tolerance and develop inter-ethnic relations.

The rights of indigenous peoples and sustainable development (recommendation No. 56)

184. State policy as regards small indigenous peoples is oriented towards ensuring sustainable development and is rooted in national legislation, which largely coincides with the wording of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

185. Three special federal Acts governing State policy on small indigenous peoples are in force in Russia, as are a series of provisions on the subject within federal- and regional-level decisions on taxation, social protection, education, culture, stock-raising, fisheries and so forth.

186. In 2009, the Russian Government approved a master plan for the sustainable development of the small indigenous peoples of the Russian North, Siberia and Far East, a list of places where the indigenous peoples of the Federation traditionally live and work, and a list of economic activities traditional among those peoples.

187. The basic aim of the action the Russian authorities are taking is to ensure that the indigenous peoples enjoy sustainable development; this means bolstering their socioeconomic potential and preserving their ancestral environments, traditional ways of life and values, both by using targeted support from the State and by tapping the internal resources of the indigenous peoples themselves.

188. Russia is complying with its international obligations to give effect to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities and the European Social Charter, not least as regards small indigenous peoples.

189. Work is now in progress on the next programme of action under the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, which includes efforts to improve legislation, preserve and promote the cultural heritage, develop the traditional culture of small indigenous peoples, preserve their traditional ways of life, improve levels of health care and education, and expand international cooperation.

190. Tangible confirmation of the positive results of State policy to promote sustainable development among indigenous peoples can be found in the fact that population numbers among the small indigenous peoples of the Russian North rose from 244,000 to 257,900 over the period 2002–2010, an increase of 5.7 per cent.

191. Constituent entities of the Federation have been receiving allocations from the federal budget since 2009 to support the economic and social development of small indigenous peoples. The volume of those allocations was 600 million roubles in 2009, and 240 million roubles per year in 2011 and 2012.

Use of native languages and education in minority languages (recommendation No. 57)

192. Russian law guarantees the peoples of the Federation the right to preserve, develop and use their native languages, traditions and culture.

193. According to census data, 277 different languages and dialects are spoken in the Russian Federation; 89 languages are used in the State general education system, 39 of them as mediums of instruction, and 50 languages of Russian peoples are studied as academic subjects.

194. At the end of 2011 the Federation had 4,418 registered media outlets in the languages of the peoples of Russia: 2,062 printed organs, 2,251 electronic media sources and 105 news agencies, operating in 66 minority languages.

195. Non-commercial organizations including ethnic cultural communities receive financial support from the executive authorities for projects to preserve and develop the traditional cultures, ways of life and languages of the peoples of Russia. On 1 October 2012 the country had 1,003 communities on the ethnic cultural register (as opposed to 717 in 2008): 16 federal, 270 regional and 717 (as opposed to 488 in 2008) local.

196. Under the Education Act, the State supports the training of professional staff to provide educational services in the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation which have no State identity of their own.

197. As a result of the linguistic policy being pursued in the Russian Federation, the numbers of schools where tuition is offered in a native minority language and of pupils studying in their native languages are both increasing.

198. All in all, Russian law and the Russian education system offer a high level of protection to linguistic rights and satisfy the requirements implicit in the Federation's international undertakings to uphold linguistic diversity.