

Dates of Meeting:

20-9-1951 – 28-9-1951

Type of Meeting:

1st national conference on minority education

Place of Meeting:

Beijing

Attendance:

Convened by Ministry of Education

Some 126 people were present, including minority delegates from various minority regions representing 15 nationalities. (The importance of the conference was marked by the presence of China's top leaders)

Major Agenda Items:

Among other items, policy decisions were made regarding minority education

Speeches/Reports:

Ma Xulun, while laying out the education plans for the minority nationality areas, emphasised the importance of patriotism, unity, fraternity and support for the People's Government which eventually became the basic principles of the minority education policies

Other Decisions and/or Actions:

This conference revised and passed policy directives in four documents:

1. On Strengthening the Work of Minority Education,
2. On the Establishment of Administrative Organs for Minority Education,
3. Temporary Plan for Training of Minority Teachers, and
4. The Treatment of Minority Students.

It was made clear that the minority languages must be used as the language of instruction in minority schools. The conference stated: "for the minorities with their own written languages such as Mongolian, Korean, Tibetan, Uygur, and Kazak, the mother tongue must be used as the language of instruction in both elementary and secondary schools. Chinese classes were only to be set up if it was deemed necessary and if the local people so wished" (EDSNAC, 1991, p.271). For minorities without independent written languages or with incomplete written scripts, they were promised the creation or reformulation of scripts by the government. For the time being, they could either use Han script or a language habitually used by the minorities as the media of instruction, depending on their wishes

Remarks: