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JOINT STATEMENT
of

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AT THE UN-PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGINEOUS ISSUES

New York, 14-25 May 2007, Sixth Session

Agenda Item No. 3: Principle theme: Territories, land and natural resources.

Respected Madam Chairperson, distinguished members of the UN-Permanent Forum, and fellow indigenous participants from around the world,

This statement emphasizes the seriousness of the grave situation of a large number of indigenous peoples whose habitat and lands have been taken away or are being taken away on the pretext of national development or security and includes some comments in brief on how their very livelihood can be saved/assured.

According to the study of World Watch Institute, Washington (Study "Indigenous Peoples and the Health of this Earth") and other serious research institutions, if this trend continues, then half of the indigenous people of this world will vanish from the surface of this earth by the middle of the century.

There are no official and reliable data available in this regard but our assessment revels that a very large area of land is being taken away whereby the percentage of the land taken away from indigenous people is unproportional and very high, up to three to four times more than others. Moreover, a vast majority of the people are not at all resettled or adequately compensated. Just to give an impression of the dimension of the problem, we would like to mention that according to our estimation, in the last 50 years about 40 or more million people in South Asia have been displaced or affected and nearly only 25 percent have been resettled whereby the rest have received no or inadequate compensation. Indigenous population in Southern Asia is nearly eight percent but the land taken away from them is somewhat 25 percent.

Considering the above mentioned, we would like to make the following suggestions:
1) The United Nations or human community must realize and act accordingly that the majority this world, and in particular, Asia and Africa, are already overpopulated. Struggle for resources has already begun and weaker parts of the society like indigenous people are being replaced by the dominant society.
2) The governments as well as multinational industries should/must establish and monitor serious and genuine partnerships with the indigenous people so that the indigenous people are full partners as well as shareholders in all respects of this developing process and not losers forever.
3) World-wide family planning is of utmost importance in this regard because, as mentioned above the majority of this world is already overpopulated.
4) Protection of forest and land of the indigenous people must get top priority in all development considerations. (There is no hope of survival for a large number of indigenous people without these measures.)
5) Depriving indigenous people without adequate, sustainable, and real compensation, hence slow genocide, should be considered a crime against humanity which can be brought to justice in international court.

May I thank you, Madam Chairperson, respected member of the permanent forum, inter-government agencies, and my brothers and sisters for your kind attention. I hope as well as request your cooperation that these suggestions find sympathetic consideration in the respective institutions/bodies.