

Intervention
by
the Thai Delegation
during the interactive dialogue with the SR on the situation of human
rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples
at the 2nd Part of the 6th Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC),
(13 December 2007)

Mr. President,

My delegation takes the floor in relation to the Addendum to the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples (A/HRC/6/15/add.3).

We associate ourselves with the Statement made by China on behalf of the Asian Group.

Thailand attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of human rights for all citizens without any discrimination to their nationality, religion or ethnic origin. For this reason, Thailand voted in favour of the draft resolution on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples because we believe in its spirit and intent.

However, my delegation wishes to make some comments as follows:

Thailand wishes to register our concerns over the lack of a universally agreed definition of "indigenous peoples" in the Declaration. It must be recognized that every country has different historical and cultural backgrounds and the experiences of many Asian countries, including Thailand, are distinct from those of other regions. Even though the lack of definition gives states and concerned parties room for interpretation, it can also lead to misunderstanding and confusion, particularly on the use of the term "indigenous peoples" interchangeably with "other ethnic groups".

Thailand wishes to reiterate the importance of interpreting the Declaration in accordance with the principles of territorial integrity or political unity as stated in the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action. It is important that the Declaration must not create any new rights and any benefits specified in the Declaration shall be interpreted in accordance with the Constitution and domestic laws of the country concerned, and international human rights instruments to which that country is a party.

My delegation would like to thank Mr. Stavenhagen for his contribution towards the protection of the rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples. We believe that the Special Rapporteur will provide valuable

resources and we wish to see him continue his work in a fair, balanced and constructive manner.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate our support to the work of the Special Rapporteur. However, we hope that the Special Rapporteur will take into consideration all the valid comments made by various delegations during the interactive dialogue yesterday and today in further discharging his mandate, in particular with regard to the need to understand different cultural and historical contexts in each country in relation to the existence of indigenous peoples, as well as the importance to maintain cooperative dialogue and close cooperation with the countries concerned.

Thank you.
