

**Statement by Stella Tamang,
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**Economic and social development
May 15th 2003,**

Mr.Chair, members of the Permanent Forum and distinguish delegates,
The world is in a mess. I feel that the more human beings are trying to get, the less we are getting. We are becoming more destructive than creative. The more we are trying to control nature and natural activities for our comfort, the more it is becoming out of control. To make ourselves comfortable, we are robbing mother earth.

The present mainstream economic and social development models that have been imposed on us do not lead to make this world where every human being including all the living being can live with justice, dignity and peace. It is very important that we understand and define development in the right way. For us development does not mean destruction, discrimination and exploitation.

For us development means sustainable development of our language, our values, our systems, our culture, our skills, our knowledge and our wisdom based on our cosmovision having respect to nature and coexist with the other creations of nature. For us development does not mean materialistic development only but the development of the mind and the heart of the people too.

Indigenous peoples are forced to be economically and socially marginalized and impoverished. This is due to the fact that our land and resources have been taken away and that our wisdom, knowledge, skills and technologies have been rejected and that our rights have been denied. We are poor not because of the lack of wisdom, knowledge, skills and technologies but it is because of the lack of rights.

Mr. Chair, the poorest of the poor is the indigenous women since indigenous women are triple discriminated. One because she is indigenous, the second because woman and third because she is indigenous women. The globalisation and the present mainstream development model multiplied by armed conflict is having adverse effect on indigenous women.

Indigenous women are deprived of the right to access to basic social and health services and information and their rights to participate and to decision making are not respected. It is sad to see how the traditional healing knowledge of indigenous women is being humiliated. Indigenous women traditional healers are now labelled as witch and are blamed of practicing witchcraft and are therefore tortured.

The declaration of national parks, construction of dams and mining by big multinational companies have adverse effect on indigenous women since their daily life is closely connected with nature and they have been deprived of these rights.

More importantly, after September 11 and the US declaration of War against terror, the government budget for the economic and social development has been curtailed to purchase and spend more for guns, war equipments and weapons.

Having said this, I would like to request the Permanent Forum to recommend the following:

1. Recognise our collective and customary rights so that we can define, design and decide our own economic and social development as indigenous peoples.
2. Recognise the ancestral land rights including natural resources,
3. Recognise the rights of indigenous peoples communities to own, manage and develop their own resources,
4. Protect and promote indigenous peoples wisdom, knowledge, skills and technologies,
5. Ensure appropriate development programme specially education programme which strengthen indigenous peoples language, tradition, culture and values,
6. Raise awareness and mainstream the indigenous peoples models of development for indigenous peoples,
7. Ensure free, prior and informed consent to all projects and programme to be implemented in indigenous peoples areas.
8. Ensure indigenous women participation in all the decision making at all level.
9. Recommend to the commission on sustainable development to integrate the indigenous peoples' Kimberly Plan of implementation,