The Struggles of Indigenous Peoples for Recognition to Gain Access to Ancestral Lands in South Africa Statement to the UNPFII, May 2007
By: Chief J. Katz
Read by: Candice Jansen

I am chief Josiah Katz, national leader of the First Indigenous Korana Africans in South Africa.

I walk to the future in the footprints of my ancestors. Our founder ancestor and visionary leader jKora was South Africa’s first freedom fighter.

He started our Korana’s 400 year long struggle against European theft of our indigenous lands, territories and natural resources that resulted in great trauma and spiritual damage that our people still suffer today.

Khoe Khoe Africans were excluded from the constitution making process, violating our rights to mother tongue education,

The national land restitution act of 1994 with its cut off date of 1913 for land claims violates the land rights of the first indigenous Khoe Khoe Africans.

The greatest challenge that confronts the vulnerable First Indigenous peoples of Africa is the refusal of African governments to recognize them in their countries constitutions.

The South African government champions the rights of Africans all over the African continent, yet in their own backyard they grossly neglect Khoe Khoe Africans.

South Africa adopted the African Charter on Human and People’s rights in 1996 yet still the Khoe Khoe is economically and socially as well as culturally marginalized.
The South African constitution only recognizes the dominant African traditional communities providing them with resources for development and because of Khoe Khoe Africans not being recognized here they are severely disadvantaged.

We will work tirelessly to develop our lands to benefit our communities in our struggle to restore our dignity as human beings.

I call upon the South African government to implement all the recommendations contained in the mission to South Africa’s report of August 2005 by the UN Special Rapporteur Dr. Stavenhagen with immediate effect.

I further call upon all African governments to support the adoption of the UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

It is good to share our lived experiences with other indigenous peoples at this session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

I am Honored and more importantly humbled by this immense privilege. Thank You.