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**Thirteenth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on
Indigenous Issues**

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United Nations Headquarters, New York

**Intervention on Agenda Item #5: Half Day Discussion on the Asia
Region**

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Thank you for this opportunity to present an urgent issue that the Tumandok or Bukidnon/Sulodnon indigenous peoples of Panay Island in the Philippines are facing right now.

More than 17,000 Tumandok indigenous peoples are threatened to be displaced by a proposed mega-dam project which covers several hectares of land, including a land area of 1, 738.8972 that was issued a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title by the government in 2004 that will be totally submerged. This is the Jalaur River Multipurpose Project Phase 2, in Calinog, Iloilo.

The mega-dam project sits on the active West Panay Fault, which caused one of the most catastrophic earthquakes in the country. Moreover, the project site is situated in a landslide-prone area. It is also in danger of heavy siltation due to denuded forests and landslides.

The mega-dam project was planned without the participation and consent of the affected indigenous communities, which in itself violates our right to Free Prior and Informed Consent, a right that is enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) of which the Government of the Philippines voted in favour of and the Philippine Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997. The main feasibility study was submitted with the Korean Eximbank two months before actual consultations were conducted among indigenous peoples communities in the project areas.

The project will inundate nine indigenous communities upstream of the planned mega-dam site. It will gravely impact on the lives, livelihood, culture and heritage of the Tumandok indigenous peoples as well as the environment in which we live and depend on for survival. It is for these reasons that the affected communities are against the construction of the mega-dam project.

While the final preparations for the construction of the mega-dam are still being undertaken, the Government of the Philippines through the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) has already engaged in mega-dam construction-related activities without the consent of the affected Tumandok.

indigenous communities. The FPIC process is being manipulated, with the use of coercion and bribery. The deployment of paramilitary troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and troops belonging to the Special Action Force of the Philippine National Police to the project areas is causing fear among the affected communities as this may worsen human rights violations committed against indigenous peoples.

Given this situation, the Tumandok Indigenous Peoples call on the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to act on the following recommendations:

1. Investigate this case especially the non-compliance of the Philippine Government and the Korean Eximbank to acquire the free prior and informed consent of the affected indigenous peoples.
2. Intervene and communicate to the Philippine Government in behalf of the Tumandok indigenous peoples to immediately put a stop to the construction of the megadam with respect to the rights of the Tumandok Indigenous Peoples that have been violated especially their right to free prior and informed consent
3. Communicate to the Philippine Government to consult with the Tumandok indigenous peoples in good faith and respect their right to free prior and informed consent guaranteed by the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in relation to this project and in future projects that may affect indigenous peoples in the Philippines.

Thank you very much for your attention.