

Ogaden People's Rights Organisation
United Nations Indigenous Forum 16th Session
Agenda Item #11-c
By Abdirahman Mahdi
UN Headquarters, New York

Madam Chair, Distinguished delegates of Indigenous Peoples, Member states, UN agencies and NGO's

I am speaking on behalf of the Ogaden People's Rights organisation. We take this opportunity to congratulate and thank all those who contributed to this great achievement. Seeing the colossal amount of work done, specifically during the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and after, it became very clear to us that not enough time and effort is given to situations of conflict in which many indigenous peoples find themselves. Coming from a very conflict prone region myself, one in which titans fight over us and our resources, I can say that the Ogaden pastoral community has persistently been left behind and never had a chance to enjoy the minimum human rights standards to which they are entitled as indigenous peoples.

Today's world is a conflict-prone one. Many regions, particularly Africa and Asia, are today combat zones where millions of indigenous face existential issues. This is the case for the Yazidis in the middle East, the Ogaden pastoralists under blockade in Ogaden and facing long drawn droughts, epidemics and oil exploration activities, the Omo people losing their lands to dams and large plantation, and many other unfortunate indigenous peoples stuck in conflicts they cannot solve by themselves.

Madame chair, we believe the forum, UN and the states shall give urgent priority to these situations. We recommend that specific clauses for the protection of those communities be incorporated into the process and specific methodologies and programs be designed to target them. We further call that this issue be raised at the UN general assembly and for a clear and unequivocal legislation and processes to be put in place.

Thank You