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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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The Akha Heritage Foundation
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Future Work of the Forum

Madame Chairwoman

My name is Matthew McDaniel. I am with the Akha Heritage Foundation and represent the Akha people of Thailand.

In the last two years I have seen events at the forum improve. This has been a very educational process. I continue to relay on a daily basis the information from here at the forum to the Akha people in Thailand.

We recommend expanded access to the forum for indigenous peoples, many groups which are not represented here, many who are from Thailand and other countries.

We recommend that all coordination be made to support the arrival of these indigenous groups.

We recommend that the Forum make every effort to advise Ecosoc on the need for a chain of intervention from the UN to the very grass roots level in indigenous communities so that the indigenous can easily obtain visas to attend this forum but can also be able to state their concerns without fear at the village level, protected from retaliation by the government which has so often been the case as illustrated in Thailand.

We recommend that the forum do all in its power to support urgent action interventions for cases where the indigenous loose all of their land as in the case of the Queen of Thailand taking the land of Hooh Yoh Akha, which immediately plunged 1500 Akha into poverty and in many other situations such as extra-judicial executions. The cases and reasons for urgent action intervention are many.

We recommend that the Forum support all possible visits by UN personnel to ascertain the indigenous case and afford protection to indigenous communities in a timely fashion in their home countries.

Thank you for this opportunity to present the Akha case regarding future work of the Forum.

Madame Chairwoman