

Statement by Mr. Alfred Ikeke

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## COLLECTIVE STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN NIGERIA

### 4<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE U.N. PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK 16<sup>TH</sup>-27<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2005 ITEM 5-FUTURE WORK OF THE FORUM



Madam Chair,

Distinguished members of the Permanent Forum,  
Fellow delegates and observers,

We thank you all for this rare and historic opportunity to speak on this agenda item with specific reference to the situation in Nigeria.

Cognizant of the critical role of Nigeria in the international arena which is facilitated by the fact that it is the largest black nation on earth and also one of the richest in terms of oil resources which are largely found in the indigenous territories of the Niger Delta, we emphatically declare that the Permanent Forum and the entire United Nations systems will be doing the world a great service if they can follow up and monitor situations in Nigeria and make interventions when and where necessary. The abundance of resources in Nigeria has not translated into the wellbeing of Nigerians rather Nigeria has become a domain where nothing seems to work. Corruption is rampant across the land and the respect for human rights and rights of Indigenous peoples is being blatantly violated.

We note with sadness that since Independence, the process of nation building had emphasized homogeneity without looking at the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian society. Now the passionate winds of pluralism and diversity are blowing across the nation and the various nationalities are crying for their identity and a reconstruction of the Nigeria nation state from the behemoth that was inherited at Independence. Nigeria presently suffers from the crisis of nation state formation and the nationality question.

It is in recognition of this state of affairs that the Federal government have been organizing a Political Reform Conference this year which has excluded the participation of Indigenous peoples and minority Communities in the process. Similarly, civil society groups in the country have put in a process to organize a parallel conference come this June.

Madam Chairperson, as delegates to this forum and supporters of Indigenous peoples in Nigeria who are fighting doggedly to establish their identity, we wish to seize this opportunity to reiterate to the forum that the struggle and quest for resource control and the restructuring of the Nigerian Federation along ethnic and Indigenous lines remain the only answer to the problems of Indigenous and tribal communities in the country. This struggle has claimed the lives of many Nigerians amongst which was the brutal hanging of Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists in 1995 which led to Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth of Nations, imposition of sanctions by the European Union and condemnation by the United Nations.

We therefore recommend, Madam Chairperson, that the Permanent Forum as part of its future work, urge the ongoing conferences in Nigeria to:

1. Recognise the inalienable rights of Indigenous Peoples and other nationalities in Nigeria to the control and use of their own resources for their own development. This is in

consonance with the African Charter and the International Bill of Human Rights for which Nigeria is a signatory.

2. That the Nigeria Federation is restructured in such a way that it guarantees and respects the special identities and rights of Indigenous Peoples and tribal communities in the country.
3. We call on the Permanent Forum to adopt the theme, "Indigenous Peoples and Self-Determination" as the theme for the 2006 Session of the forum.

Thank you for your patience and for listening.

This is jointly presented by:

**Organization**

**Representative**

**Ethnic Minority and Indigenous Rights  
Organization of Africa (EMIROAF)**

**Mr. Alfred Ilenre**

Green Peoples Environmental Network (GREPNET)

Mr. Adewale Adeoye

Partnership for Indigenous Peoples Environment (PIPE)

Mr. Goodluck Diigbo

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)

Mr. Legborsi Saro Pyagbara