

STATEMENT FOR THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM FOR INDIGENOUS ISSUES

THEME : TERRITORIES ,LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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I. Background and Context

Indigenous peoples particularly the Pygmy Batwa in Rwanda are the first occupants in the territories that today have been taken over by the non-indigenous peoples . It is the haven of natural resources and that is one of the reasons these territories attract other more foreign investors .It has therefore raised another war against the indigenous peoples .Our respective states are earning a lot from these foreign investors through taxes and many other means.

• Challenges

Rwanda is relatively inhabited by people influenced by modernizing economies and high rate demand of globalization .The imperatives of development and modernization in an era of increasing global integration have poised critical challenges for indigenous peoples .This has more challenges for Pygmy Batwa in Africa as a whole .To respond to the United nation Millennium Declaration Commitment to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015,the rationale for United nations engagement with indigenous peoples and their organizations should be centered in the UN's corporate policy .UN has an important role to play in facilitating and brokering dialogue and advancing concerns of indigenous peoples with some emphasis on Pygmy Batwa in Great Lakes Region. These are extremely part of the most marginalized peoples in the society, deprived of their territories, lands and natural resources basic rights.

II. Policies and Practices

Some policies and practices do focus directly to indigenous peoples. But the issue is how our respective governments are responding to these challenging innovation?

***World Bank**

The World bank P.O 4.10 states that the bank recognizes the identities and cultures of indigenous peoples linked to lands on which they live and natural resources on which they depend. Indigenous peoples are closely tied to land, forests, waters, wildlife and other natural resources...Pygmy Batwa in Gishwati natural forest until today have not been compensated after their land was taken by the World Bank project of GBK in 1989. It destroyed their natural resources without mercy and until today they are still helpless, landless and more exposed to insecurity prevailing the Great Lakes Region.

- **International Labour Organization(ILO)**

Its Convention No. 169 (Art.13) states that governments shall respect the special importance relationship with land or territories occupied by people. The rights of ownership and possessions of the peoples concerned over the lands they traditionally occupy shall be recognized. These are challenging issues the Pygmy Batwa are facing everyday in their lives. They have not until today been recognized for ownership as far as land is concerned. The new Land Bill has been voted by both Lower and Upper Houses. In the bill, there is no mention of Batwa in any procedures to resolve the land claims by people concerned.

There are many other institutions with some indigenous policies. The only need is to do the follow up as to how these policies are being respected by the member governments.

Thank you.