

**Statement of Mr R.J. Lakra, WORLD ADIVASI COUNCIL (WAC)
AT THE UN WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS**

Geneva, 22-26 July 2002, 20th session.

Agenda Item No.7: International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, including information relating to the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

Mr. Chairman,

This statement contains some remarks in brief regarding International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

It has helped considerably to increase a worldwide awareness regarding the Indigenous Peoples and their situation (resulting in the formation of Permanent Forum under United Nations System).

However, the situations of the indigenous peoples in many/most of the countries have gravely deteriorating (more or less steadily since the last 50 years) in all sphere of life in spite of considerable means spent for their protection & development. The present situation of the Ingenious Peoples deserves further special attention (program) in future too with some necessary corrections/additions which are mentioned below:

- 1.-It seems necessary that a thorough investigation of the achievements of the development aid policies and its implementations systems (including the protection of human rights of the last decades) must takes place in order to make necessary corrections.
- 2.-The principles and implementations methods of social and economic development are universal and well known like the human rights. These must be applied in practice for all, (including indigenous peoples too) and not denied by giving fake reasons (as if they can not help themselves). This includes:
 - Full participation and freedom of choice in all development activities affecting them.
 - Help for self help (and for self sufficiency).
 - Development assistance/aid through the organisations of the indigenous people's themselves (and not via NOGs and other institutions of the dominating society).
- 3.-Interntional aids/projects must undergo thorough international monitoring from the very beginning (because most of the aids have not reached them).
- 4.-System of direct and indirect restrain (from the dominating society) must be replaced by empowering the indigenous peoples (and the minorities). Restraint/suppression is the main cause of their desperate situation(and is it not due to lack of development projects and the ability to develop).
- 5.-Encouragement and promotion should be given for permanent FORUMS for dialog between different religions including indigenous religions. (There can not be peace, hope or progress for the minorities like us without peace and understanding between the different religions and cultures).
- 6.-World-wide family planning and the protection of forest must get top priority in all development considerations. (There is no hope of survival for a large number of indigenous peoples without these measures). (In many countries indigenous peoples are being replaced by dominating peoples).
- 7.-Close co-operation and co-ordinated activities of all organisations concerned, such as the UN-Human Rights department, World Bank, WHO, Human Rights Organisations ,funding agencies and churches are required for a real progress for all .(Each organisation should not be satisfied with a good work/result, it achieves. They must judge if their concerted efforts are moving the whole human community in a positive direction or not).
- 8.-A program for World-Wide promotion and education for peace, tolerance and understanding should be worked out and implemented, including balanced school text books as well as a moral code for information systems like television, news paper and internet.
- 9.-World wide research program for humane& sustainable development for whole human society (including minorities) should be promoted from the U.N. as well as from national research authorities.
- 10.-Depriving the very livelihood of indigenous peoples without adequate & real compensation, & hence slow genocide should be considered as crime against humanity.

May I thank you Mr. Chairman and my brothers and sisters for your kind attention and

Request you to help that the suggessations may find sympathic considerations in the respective institutions/bodies.