

Second Session the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
May 2003

Agenda item 4 HEALTH

Thank you Chairperson,

We have been listening to the concerns on health being voiced by many indigenous persons here today. Generally and specifically, we also have many similar concerns, hence our recommendations are similar or same as many already made here.

First of all, we would like many other or all indigenous peoples organizations present here recommend that the WHO adopt or correct the language in its report referred to here earlier – to use the words indigenous peoples instead of indigenous populations.

Secondly, since our organization was not able to be present in the Chiangmai Asian Indigenous Peoples consultation, we would like to further endorse the recommendations endorsed by the Asian Indigenous Peoples Caucus.

Finally, our organization JOHAR will also add to the concerns on health due to uranium/nuclear radioactive assault on all peoples, particularly indigenous peoples, because these harmful and hazardous activities are often willfully carried on by government or companies under the pretext of defense or national security and other pretexts.

In studies carried out on uranium radioactivity in our territories, it has been found that water bodies uranium contamination leads to topsoil subsoil pollution and underwater seepage thereby spreading dangerous and harmful radioactive pollution over a wide area.

The usage of polluted topsoil, subsoil and water sources for agriculture, water and other use leads to assaults on the health and lives of people living in the area. Often the reproductive capacities of women and men are seriously and devastatingly affected, often leading to consecutive and multiple still births or births with very serious congenital deformities.

We therefore recommend that the UN, through its appropriate agencies conduct medical studies, monitor the situation and if necessary or possible call upon states conducting or continuing such harmful and homicidal activities to put a stop to them. We also endorse recommendations made by other organizations here on uranium /nuclear or radioactive pollution and assaults.

Thank you Mr.Chairperson

Ratnaker Bhengra , Jharkhandis Organization for Human Rights