

**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
First Session New York, 13 to 24 May, 2002  
Agenda Item: 6**



**REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM  
RELATED TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: HUMAN RIGHTS**

Statement by Benon MUGARURA

***African Indigenous and Minority Peoples Organization (AIMPO)***

***BP. 3474 KIGALI-Rwanda***

***E-mail:*** [benonmugarura@hotmail.com](mailto:benonmugarura@hotmail.com)

Mr. Chairperson, members of the Permanent Forum, UN Agencies, Government delegates Indigenous brothers and sisters ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Batwa/Pygmies of the Great Lakes region of Africa, my organization and in my capacity, we have come here with the sense of achievement, with hope and with the vision my name I'm called Benon MUGARURA.

Mr. Chairperson, the Batwa/Pygmies of this region are believed to have been the first inhabitants. However, owing to their low population and their lack of political ambition, they have lost their territories and instead have become dominated by new comers. Mr. Chairperson, for a long time Batwa have not been considered for inclusion in the development programs meant to improve their human rights values such as: education, souci-economic, health care and many other amenities. They have been subjected to severe discrimination, marginalisation throughout their history. The Bata of Rwanda for instance, share a common language, religion and culture with other Rawness people, but they are recognized on the basis of certain specialty practice like their livelihood, mannerism, the way they speak and the way they conduct themselves. The Bata form between 0.2 to 0.4% of the population. Until to Bata suffer a lot of fundamental human rights abuse.

Bata have not received any humanitarian aid from international community, prèsently, the Bata survive in a state of constant displacement for example:

they have no land rights, no secure employment, no access to education, suffer from many avoidable health problems, live in temporary shelter and are grossly misunderstood and stereotyped by their neighbors.

Is our hope Mr. Chairperson that this Forum will be able to address these critical fundamental human rights of my community will be always in forum's agenda.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak.