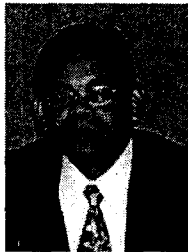


Presented by Mr. Kim Thong



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EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

Madam Chairperson, distinguished members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen:



On behalf of the Khmer Kampuchea Krom Federation, I would like to address to the forum on the issue of extreme poverty and hunger. We, the Khmer Krom are the indigenous people in Mekong Delta Southern Vietnam. The world organization lacks awareness of the Khmer Krom people due to suppression by the Vietnamese Communist Regime. The Vietnamese's government continued with their cruel policy towards the Khmer Krom people, which are lead to the major reason for the extreme poverty and hunger.

Currently, we are facing with fierce cycle that adversely affects our ability to eradicate poverty and hunger experienced by the Khmer Krom people:

1. The Khmer Krom people are being deprived of their status within the Vietnamese society as a legitimate citizen.
2. The Vietnamese government in controls the Khmer Krom homelands and being confiscated by force, leaving thousands of the Khmer Krom homeless and hunger.
3. Civil rights are denied to the Khmer Krom people, and the land-grabs committed by the Vietnamese authorities and by the State on the Khmer Krom defenseless people.
4. Our rights to dignity and decent life are nowhere to be found. Khmer Krom people continue to live in an abject poverty and hunger.
5. Lack of Education limits the economic well being of the Khmer Krom people.
6. Lack of proper agricultural training and no viable technologies have resulted in low yields and poor crops.
7. Khmer Krom farming communities from generation to generations trapped in diminishing farmers' enslavement.
8. There is a healthcare crisis directly amongst the Khmer Krom community, which is resulted by poverty.
9. There are no healthcare or clinic facilities being provided to the Khmer Krom people at the affordable level.
10. Epidemic blindness disease has stricken more than 3,000 Khmer Krom poor across the provinces of Soc Trang and Tra Vinh due to the toxics wastes by the Vietnamese's government.

Ladies and Gentlemen, before I end my speech today, I would like to bring your attention from the former South Africa's President, Mr. Nelson Mandela, at the Summit in London, England described: *"poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. And overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life."*

For this reason, we Khmer Krom people seek nothing more than our rights to social and economic justice in our ancestral homelands, Kampuchea Krom (south Vietnam); which has been deprived and neglected by the State of Vietnam far too long and far too devastating to our Khmer Krom society.

Madam Chairperson, distinguished members of the Forum, and honored guests, for allowing me all this time to present my speech on behalf of the Khmer Krom people. I am strongly praised the Forum initiatives and your roles on the “eradicating extreme poverty and hunger” and on all other issues. It is with our highest regards, my people and I, once again, thank you for your noble cause for humanity as a whole.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.
Hoang Duong