

17/05/05, #3a, 56



**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
4th Session, 16-27 May 2005 held at UN Headquarters New York**

Item No.: 3(a) & (b)

Millenium Development Goal and Indigenous Peoples'

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Respected Chair Sir/Madam,

I am glad for giving me an opportunity of highlighting the main theme of this Session world-wide, and in particular, the case of ZO Indigenous people, who are now still living in divided, consequent upon Colonial Administrative set up, depriving of ZO People's Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Freedom.

We all know the global effects of the Colonial Rules, which have suppressed and oppressed the Indigenous peoples applying 'divide and rule' policy. Thus, the Fundamental Rights of Indigenous peoples are deprived of, and their Fundamental Freedoms are curtailed.

At such situations, the Indigenous peoples are less known and have less contact with outside world, hence, modern living facilities are beyond their dreams. However, the United Nations Millenium Development Goals as one could expect, would be the dawn for the Indigenous peoples living in outreach corners of the earth.

The Colonial Rule which have effected the Indigenous peoples globally, do not spare the ZO Indigenous people too.

In the good old days, the ZO people lived in their present habitation undisturbed, raising ZO Kingdom in between 835-862 A.D. as recorded by the Chinese writer, Fan-ch'o in his book 'MANSHU ...' and there remained, till the British invasions of the Asian Sub-continent, which also attacked the ZO country, in their last and final invasions, 1871-72 and 1888-90, which they called 'Chin-Lushai Expedition', commanded by Brig. Generals, subjugated the ZO people and divided the country under different Administrative units, adding to the Province or States where they came from.

The Coloniser themselves, seeing the wrongs that have been done to the ZO people, tried to put them together again under single administrative unit, as resolved in their Historic Chin- Lushai Conference, held at Fort William, Calcutta, on the 29TH January, 1892, subject to the construction of Roads and Communications. In spite of this meaningful resolution, though link-roads and communications to be built were clearly mentioned in the subsequent meetings of the Administrators, proper communications are yet to be built and constructed, and the Re-unification of the divided ZO people and rectification of the territorial divisions was also kept pending till today.

In these common effects of Colonisation being faced by the Indigenous peoples globally, the ZO Indigenous people are not exceptional. As we all know, in absence of infrastructures built up, no development agenda was considered. However, I hope, the MDGs No.8., which 'address the least developed countries' special needs' would not overlook the 'special need of ZO people' in regards to infrastructures built up, stress in motorable roads and other communications including power generations under rural electrifications. Further, I would also request the world body, that in performing the MDGs within the territories of Indigenous peoples, the recent administrative or political divisions should not be a hinderance to complete the task of MDGs.(as also recommended in DD Art.35)

Usually, Development Projects have adverse effect to the Indigenous peoples, like Kaptai Dam in Chittagong Hill Tracts, completed in 1964, resulted in evacuation of ZO Indigenous people, many families being homeless and became refugees in their neighbouring States. Tuirial and Tuivai Hydel Projects which are now commencing in northern Mizoram would also have the same effect as the land required for the completion of the Projects, 4721 sq.kms in area, would be handed over to NEEPCO (a Govt. of India undertaking). In exchange of their land, the ZO people will have 12% of the benefit and 88% will go to the executing Agent, as per the existing norms for constructing Hydel Projects in India, which is infact economic exploitation of the Indigenous people. Besides Natural Gas extraction Plan which has been taken up by the multi-national companies in Arakan coast, would also require to lay Gas Pipe line across ZO country, bisecting the ZO territory, from Arakan to Mizoram, Assam and Meghalaya with a heavy pipe line securities having reserved area of land on both sides impenetrable by the ZO inhabitants with a resultant alienation to their land, is also now commencing.

However, one should hope the operation of MDGs will promote educational and economic interest of Indigenous peoples with special care and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations. I therefore, would like to mention the following basic points so that the Indigenous peoples may proceed nearer to reap the benefit of MDGs :

- (1) Primary educations should be introduced and conducted in local dialects along with an ABC of International language.(MDGs No.2)
- (2) Health Care should be performed through visiting Doctors and Primary Health Centres should also be established wherever convenient.(MDGs 4&5)
- (3) Infrastructure Facilities, like Link-road and other communications including Hydel Projects, should be built up within the territories of Indigenous peoples, without alienating them from their land and its resource, irrespective of Colonial Administrative divisions created for their convenience.(DD Art.35 & MDGs.8)
- (4) To promote integrity and solidarity of the whole Nations, Indigenous peoples are not to be subjected in their practices of Customary laws, cultural and Social exchanges as well as to develop themselves in their own way and recent international borders dividing the Indigenous peoples' territories should not be an impediment to these operations.

THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN.