

Fourteenth Session of United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
Item 5: Dialogue on the optional protocol to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of  
Indigenous Peoples

Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation and the Khmer Kampuchea-Krom Temple

Speaker: Bon Lam

Mister Chair,

On behalf of millions of Khmer Krom people living in Kampuchea-Krom or the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, we would like to thank Mister Chair for allowing us to speak on behalf of our Indigenous Peoples. We would like to affirm our support for the incorporation of an Optional Protocol to the UNDRIP as a mechanism that allows for individuals and Indigenous Peoples to monitor its implementation and keep Indigenous Peoples, States, UN agencies, and relevant stakeholders accountable.

We understand there are many challenges that exist in effectively implementing an Optional Protocol that is both practical in its application and comprehensive in its mandate. To that end, we like to put forward the following recommendations and considerations:

1. The provisions of the optional protocol should include a complaints procedure, an inquiry procedure, and an early warning system. Similar to the Optional Protocol for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Optional Protocol for the UNDRIP should also allow violations to be investigated on behalf of people or groups who are unable to report violations due to fear of reprisals.
2. A regular review process whereby states are required to address specific recommendations regarding instances when the Optional Protocol is enacted similar to the model that exists for the Universal Periodic Review. That is, whenever provisions of the Optional Protocol are enacted, such as a complaints procedure or early warning system, states should be required to address each occurrence and respond to any recommendations the monitoring committee puts forward.
3. Effective dissemination of information regarding the optional protocol to ensure Indigenous Peoples are aware of how to report human rights violations. Procedures of the Optional Protocol should also allow Indigenous Peoples to construct their narrative of the violations in their respective language and report it without requiring attendance at the the Permanent Forum to do so.
4. A process whereby NGOs, UN agencies, and private institutions operating within member states can be trained to act as reporting bodies of human rights abuses. In this manner, not only will Indigenous Peoples have additional and diverse avenues through which to report human rights violations, it will also facilitate collaboration of multisectoral organizations in recognizing and responding to human rights abuses. Furthermore, this will promote Indigenous human

rights in the broader consciousness of society and encourage cooperation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens.

In closing, we would like to put forward for consideration a question that affects many unrecognized Indigenous Peoples - Would the lack of recognition of Indigenous identity by States impact the accessibility of the Optional Protocol by Indigenous Peoples?

Thank you very much.