

JOINT INTERVENTION BY THE ASIA
INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S NETWORK and TEBTEBBA

on :

Agenda 4b : Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples (by : Eleanor P. Dictaan-Bang-oa; AIWN Secretariat, Tebtebba)

MR CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE UNPF, INDIGENOUS BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Gawis ay agew ken dakayo am-in!

In our work towards the promotion of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Tebtebba and the Secretariat of the Asian Indigenous Women's Network, would like to bring to your attention the following situations of indigenous women in Asia :

> From January to Oct. 31, 2009, there are reported 9 incidents of sexual violence from attempted rape to rape and murder of Chakma, Tripura and Marma women and girls, youngest and oldest among which are 4 and 50 years old, respectively in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. These were reportedly committed mostly by government-sponsored settlers in the area. In another incident, three Chakma women were reportedly tortured and illegally detained by state security groups after failing to accomplish their rescue operations for a kidnap-for-ransom case.

> Reports from Burma have it that "since July 27, 2009, the regime's troops have burned down over 500 houses, scores of granaries, and forcibly relocated almost 40 villages, mostly in Laikha township (Central Shan State). Over 100 villagers, both men and women, have been arrested and tortured. At least three villagers have been killed. One young woman was shot while trying to retrieve her possessions from her burning house, and her body thrown into a pit latrine. Another woman was gang-raped in front of her husband by an officer and three of his troops." (www.shanwomen.org) In Karen State, 4,000 people from 20 villages reportedly fled to Thailand due to a military offensive that commenced on June 2, 2009 in the area. Among them are more than 800 children below 13 years old, 20 pregnant women and more than 20 lactating women with their babies. (Statement of the KWO on SPDC Offensive in Pan-An District Inside Karen State. June 16, 2009. www.karenwomen.org)

> In Assam of North East India, one indigenous woman human rights defender was almost assassinated by unidentified men as she was about to go home from the university where she works as a teacher. In January this year, her sister was killed in front of her home by unidentified gunmen.

>In Sarawak, Malaysia, the media exposed reports of sexual abuses by logging workers on Penan girls and women in 2008. Last year, no less than the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development confirmed these allegations. Despite and inspite these, justice to the survivors and their families remains illusive as the Police Deputy Inspector-General recently announced the case *closed due to lack of evidence and cooperation from the victims*. An independent fact finding mission (the official report of which will be sent to you) to the area revealed several other cases of rape, forced marriage and other forms of gender violence among Penan girls and women by logging workers for 15 years now. All these in a situation of poverty, deprivation and insecurity impacted by the entry of logging companies into the Penan territories disrupting their total ways of life.

These are just a few but they speak of the gross violation of the rights and freedoms of indigenous women that stems from intolerance that is intricately carved into prevailing state policy and practice. Intolerance that is perpetuating the non-recognition of the rights and freedoms of indigenous peoples. Intolerance that is picking on the already marginalized situations of indigenous women to feed a perverted notion of power , authority and development.

On this occasion of the 9th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, we :

1. Urge governments and states to fulfill their commitments by fully and effectively implementing, in close consultation and partnership with indigenous peoples organizations, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the standard in combating all forms of discrimination and violence against indigenous women. We believe that the full and effective recognition, protection and fulfillment of our rights to be free from violence and rights as women are integral to our rights as indigenous peoples.
2. We urgently call on the UNSR on Indigenous Peoples, in coordination with, or in a joint mission with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences, to address the violence against indigenous women in Malaysia, Bangladesh, Burma and India by conducting impartial investigation or calling on the state and /or federal governments to effectively honor their obligations to international human rights law and commitments to standards by guaranteeing the security, justice and healing of survivors of gender violence and their communities.
3. This year is also the review years for the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millenium Development Goals. Fifteen years after Beijing and 10 years after the Millenium Summit, indigenous peoples' situations of poverty, non-access to basic services like health and education, especially among women remains pervasive. We reiterate and reaffirm the Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women as a key tool in achieving the MDGs with respect to indigenous women and their communities while advancing commitments to the UNDRIP. Further, on this regard, we call on governments and UN agencies to include data on indigenous peoples, disaggregated by sex and ethnicity, in their reports and space for

indigenous peoples and women in the different processes leading to the MDG Review Summit in September 2010.

4. THANK YOU MR CHAIRMAN!