

Friday 18 PM #157

**6<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
United Nations Headquarter, New York  
14 May to 25 May 2007**

**Item 5: Human Rights: dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples**

**Statement by the 2007 indigenous fellows of OHCHR on the Indigenous Fellowship Programme**

Thank you Madam Chairperson, members of the Permanent Forum, distinguished Government delegates, brothers and sisters,

My name is Rahamatu Mallam Sali - Mbororo from Cameroon and I am making this statement on behalf of the fellows of the 2007 Indigenous Fellowship Program at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The 2007 English speaking fellows are: Saara Alakorva – Saami from Finland, Gulnara Abbasova – Crimean Tatar from Ukraine, Arthuso Malo-ay – Higaonon from the Philippines, and Binota Moy Dhamai - Tripura from Bangladesh. We would like to take this opportunity to greet the former fellows who are present at the Forum today, as well as the 2007 Spanish speaking fellows.

The Indigenous Fellowship Program was launched in 1997 by the then Centre for Human Rights following General Assembly resolution 50/157 of December 1995 adopted in the context of the First International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. In its first decade, the Fellowship Program benefited more than 100 indigenous representatives from a total of 46 different countries in the world representing Asia, the Pacific, Europe, Latin America, Africa and North America.

The Program progressively developed and is currently composed of 4 linguistic components: English, French, Spanish and Russian. It is imparted in close collaboration with other UN organizations or specialized agencies including the ILO, UNESCO, UNITAR, UNDP, WIPO that are actively involved in the delivery of training sessions. The organization and implementation of the Spanish, French and Russian speaking programmes has been undertaken in close collaboration with the University of Deusto, the University of Bourgogne and the NGO RAIPON.

Last year, responding to some of the recommendations made by previous fellows to incorporate a more practical field component, OHCHR Andean Program launched a pilot country component of the indigenous fellowship programme in Ecuador, whereby one fellow undertook a four months program in collaboration with UNFPA the leading coordinating agency for intercultural issues. Since the launch of the Russian speaking programme in 2005, the session in Moscow has been reinforced with the addition of one week component organised by OHCHR with the participation of the United Nations country team, component which will hopefully be strengthened in 2007.

Madam Chairperson,

The UN General Assembly Resolution 59/174 proclaims the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. Article 47 of the Programme of Action recommends, I quote, that "*programmes of education on the human rights of indigenous peoples should*

*be developed and strengthened, including the current Indigenous Fellowship Programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights”.*

We would therefore welcome that cooperation with the Permanent Forum on the Indigenous Fellowship Program be strengthened and would like to make the following **recommendations**:

**1) That the Permanent Forum systematizes the organization of a few days training session for the Indigenous Fellows at the Secretariat before the starting date of the Permanent Forum.**

**2) That the Permanent Forum contributes to the costs involved for the participation of the future selected candidates of the Indigenous Fellowship Program in the Permanent Forum.**

**3) In order to raise awareness on the Programme, we would also welcome that members of the Permanent Forum facilitate the dissemination of information on the Indigenous Fellowship Programme in their respective countries. Information can be made available for that purpose.**

Last but not least, we are thankful to all for giving this opportunity to indigenous representatives and believe that the Fellowship Program is an extremely valuable training to empower indigenous representatives, not only at a personal level but also at the level of our communities who indirectly benefit from it.

Thank you Madam Chairperson!