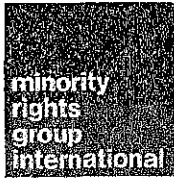


Speaker: ~~Glen~~ PAYOT

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Oral Statement
Minority Rights Group
International
HRC 27th session
ID with the SR on the rights
of Indigenous Peoples
September 2014

Thank you Mr. President, Madame Special Rapporteur,

At the outset, Minority Rights Group International (MRG) would like to warmly congratulate you on your recent appointment. We are convinced that your extensive experience in defending the rights of indigenous peoples, both at the national and at the international levels, will be an asset to the mandate, and we look forward to collaborating with you in the future.

MRG welcomes the priorities you outlined in this first report, and we would like to elaborate on two points that you make therein.

Firstly, MRG shares your view that more work needs to be done on the **development of practical implementation measures**. While indigenous peoples' ancestral and customary land rights, as well as their right to free, prior and informed consent has been increasingly recognized by international, regional and national bodies, states are all too often reluctant to implement important precedent-setting decisions, and it is all too often difficult for indigenous communities around the world to translate victories into concrete measures to recover their rights. More than 4 years after the landmark decision of the African Commission in favour of the *Endorois* in **Kenya**, the Kenyan government has still failed to take any meaningful step to implement the ruling, and the Endorois community is still deprived of its traditional lands. In **Belize**, despite two rulings by the Supreme Court and a decision by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Maya communities are still deprived of their internationally and domestically recognised customarily owned lands, after oil drilling concessions to international investors have been over their ancestral land. In both cases, the problem is not a lack of clarity of the law, it is rather a problem of national implementation measures which are unduly delayed, decided without consulting rights-holders, or simply inappropriate.

Mister President, Madame Special Rapporteur,

MRG also welcomes the focus you plan to give, throughout your tenure, to the **better implementation of economic and social rights for indigenous peoples**. While working towards that aim, it is important that the voices of indigenous peoples themselves be listened to at every stage, in the planning, implementation and evaluation of laws, programmes and policies aimed at improving their situation. In that respect, MRG notes with concern the recent attempts to downgrade or hinder the voices of indigenous peoples' representatives from the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples due to take place in New York later this month. Any UN-sponsored conference which effectively excludes the very peoples whose rights it claims to advance will clearly lack credibility.

I thank you.