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7th Session of United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous
Issues

21st April – 2nd May 2008

MIGRATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TO URBAN AREA

Dear Madam Chair,

My name is Abdul Nasir, I am representing Indigenous People Survival Foundation in Chitral, which has a special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of UN (ECOSOC). Chitral is located in North West of Pakistan, in Hindukush Himalaya's mountain range, with population reaching near four hundred thousand people.

First of all I would like to thank you giving me the opportunity to bring my people's voices to the 7th session of the United Nation Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

1. Indigenous people in Chitral Pakistan are facing the danger of extinction due to the loss of their properties in the hands of alien people from big cities. UN Declaration on Indigenous people should be involved to safeguard the rights of Indigenous People through the government of Pakistan.
2. The indigenous Khow and Kalash people living in the district of Chitral in the Hindukush mountain belt of Northern Pakistan are facing the danger of the extinction of their culture, language, folklore music and folk games due to high pressure from outsiders, changing the demography of the area in a fast pace of commercial gains. UN declaration on indigenous people may be invoked through the government of Pakistan to protect the language, culture folklore and folk music, folk dances of indigenous people in Chitral.

Madam Chair,

We the people of district Chitral have recently faced a very harsh and unforgettable experience as consequence of climatic change last year. One of the most beautiful and historical village named Sonoghore, which was famous all over the district because of our native cultural values and folk stories was washed away by an avalanche thousands years old glacier standing over the said village melted at massive level for the first time in the history destroying 50 houses, thousands of hectare of agriculture land, pastures and more than 700 people were effected and hundreds become homeless.

Because of irreversible destruction of agriculture lands and traditional houses, the indigenous inhabitants migrated to urban areas searching for shelters. If we could

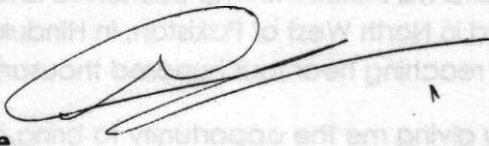
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23 -
not make arrangements in case of similar natural calamities in future, the indigenous communities will gradually move away and settle in urban areas. With the migration of native communities the local trends, culture and traditions and even the local language disappear with passage of time when they are settled in new urban set up.

Madam Chair,

IN my opinion, mass migration to urban areas in search of livelihood is the biggest threat for Indigenous people all over the world. We need to take this problem on urgent basis to protect and keep settled the local people in their place of origin.

Than you very much once again


Abdul Nasir
Representative
Indigenous People survival Foundation
Chitral

Mailing address:

Abdul Nasir
Polo ground Road
Chitral NWFP, **Pakistan**

Land Off: +92943413084
+92943301660
+92943414744

Home No: +92943412410

Cell No : +923449076684

Email :
abdulnasir63@yahoo.com