

Statement by

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To the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of indigenous People  
Fifth Session, July 11, 2012

Good Morning Madam Chairperson

Guyana strongly believe that the rights to land provides recognition, respect and the support for the of resting and revival of indigenous culture and languages. One conditions for consideration in the titling of lands to Amerindians in Guyana is that of the relationship with the land for sacred, ceremonial and heritage site.

In sharing the experiences and efforts that are advanced currently by the Guyana Government:

Guyana declared in 1995 the month of September as Amerindian Heritage month, in recognition of the indigenous people as being equal, to ensure the recognition of indigenous peoples as part of our diverse ethnic nation.

Annually Amerindians promotes the cultural heritage, achievements and contributions of the people. Highlighted are Amerindians music and arts; Indigenous culinary art; literature and languages. Special recognition are afforded to renowned Amerindians both past and present.

Importantly, the Walter Roth museum displays and provides a good perspective on the Amerindian ways of life and displays an array of exhibits and artifacts on Amerindians.

In Georgetown our capital city, the Umana Yana (the Benab-the traditional meeting place) and the Amerindian village are constructed strategically and are used for international and local conferences, cultural shows and various diverse events of Guyanese people. Both buildings displays the unique Amerindian architecture style.

The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs operates a craft shop and continues to support the sale of indigenous craft, arts, thereby providing a marketing opportunity and promotion of Amerindians craftsmanship.

The Ministry of Amerindian 5 years strategic plan recognize the lost of three languages (Carib, Arawak and Warrau ) of our nine indigenous nation.

Six indigenous language are being practices. Namely Wapishana, Wai-Wai, Macushi, Patamona, and Arecuna.

The government of Guyana has produced the dictionaries for six of the languages as the first step in preparation for extending the preservation of indigenous languages into a written form which will include text for reading and learning materials.

The University of Guyana Amerindian Research Unit continues to publish studies and journal on Amerindian cultural and languages.

Currently from July 9th to 16th 2012, Guyana is the venue and supporting with resource personnel, Kayeno of French Guyana and Suriname in the finalization of their Arawak language .

The result of the above effort has been most interesting; nationally there is increase national awareness and respect of the richness and acceptance and participation of the Amerindian cultural heritage.

It is important for member states to seek to protect culture and languages of indigenous people as is /demanded /recommended.

Indeed it is important for States to address the issue of protecting and revival of indigenous culture and languages where these have been lost. Culture and languages are critical for identity of a people.