Maloca Internationale

Expert Mechanism on the rights of indigenous peoples. Geneva, July 2018
Item 7: UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples

Thank you Mr Chair. Indigenous people are an integral part of diversity and ever-growing human dynamics in the world, as we can see from the indigenous leaders and fellows that join us here today. However, indigenous people from all over the world have been in continuous danger for eradication of their family communities, culture and spiritual traditions because of the lack of consultation and consent by states.

In Gabon, there are over 50 different indigenous peoples, which their main habitat is within the forest. With the large amount of construction happening in that part of the world for states to become more westernised, it can provide you with a high indication that consultation and consent from the indigenous people are low on states developmental agenda.

According to Article 24 of the declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples, they have the right to maintain their health practices and their vital medicinal plants. Furthermore for the people of Gabon, iboga is a native plant that has had proven health benefits on not only for the people of Gabon, but westerners that travel from places such as Germany, France, UK and America for the healing benefits of this medicine. Therefore, with the rooting out of the forests these medicinal plants become very scarce, that their right to conserve and have access to traditional medicine has become revoked which will led to a higher number of death rates of the Gabon people and eventually their culture being talked about not in the present but as a time in history.

The state need to consider being more creative in the way the engage with countries that have indigenous communities potentially on a request basis and having a personalised strategic process plan. Ethnobotanical discussions and development projects in relation to iboga, would be beneficial for the indigenous people and the state of Gabon.

Thank you.