

**15<sup>th</sup> Session, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
UN Headquarters, New York, USA  
9-20 May 2016**

**Agenda item 4: Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.**

**Statement by Indigenous Peoples Foundation for Education and Environment (IPF) &  
Indigenous Education Network in Thailand (IEN)**

**Delivered by Suraporn Suriyamonton**

Thank you Chair,

Allow me to present the situations of indigenous peoples in Thailand based on two reports that have been prepared by the network of Indigenous Peoples in Thailand and Indigenous Education Network:

1. The first report highlights the situation of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Thailand covering 1) Right to Identity and Participation in Decision Making; 2) Rights to Lands, Territories and Resources, Traditional Livelihoods and Access to Justice; 3) Right to nationality & Access to Basic Services; 4) Right to Quality and Culturally Relevant Education; 5) Indigenous Women and Girls & Human Trafficking.
2. The second report is on the situation of access to quality and relevant education for indigenous children and youth in Thailand with some example of good practice in education model that uses mother tongue as language of instruction for bilingual/multilingual education approach.

Both reports provide recommendations and can be found on the website of OHCHR:

Chair,

In the aforementioned report you will see that one of the most serious issues is land rights where indigenous peoples faced force eviction and human rights defenders face life threatening and forced disappearance such as in the case of Billy Pawlachue Rakjongcharoen the Karen Human Right Defender in Kaeng-krachan National Park leaving five still very young children and wife behind; Indigenous Chao-le or Sea Gypsy are facing eviction from their ancestral land on Rawai Beach, Phuket over land dispute with Business Company Baron World Trade Ltd to develop their luxury villa, with no protection from the government.

While we have to deal with on-going gross human rights violation that requires our attention immediately, we also have to position ourselves for long term development. Education is a key to development and to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals but the education must be partnership and human rights based approach.

Progress has been made such as the issuance of cabinet resolution dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August and 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010 call for the restoration of traditional practices and livelihoods of Karen and Chao-le (Sea Gypsy) Indigenous Peoples, and approval of national language policy 2010 and the Ministerial Education regulation on Community Learning Center 2009. However, challenges remain in implementation due to institutional limitation and lack of political will and commitment.

We support the recommendation made by the Indigenous Youth Caucus and the Global Indigenous Language Caucus regarding indigenous languages. We would like to recommend the following:

1. **Access to quality compulsory Education.** We recommend the support and mainstreaming of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education approach in Cooperation with different forms of Indigenous Education with effective participation of Indigenous Communities. This approach has proven with evidence-based, an effective teaching methodology in early primary education for Indigenous children in MTBMLE pilot schools in Thailand. We need the government to provide resource support and make it accessible to all indigenous children.
2. We call on relevant UN agencies offices in the country/region to engage with us the Network of Indigenous Peoples in Thailand to raise awareness and promote the UNDRIPs and engage with us on developing action plans, follow up and review of SDGs. Especially UNESCO and UNICEF to engage with Indigenous Peoples Organizations and Indigenous Education Networks to strengthen the language policy, its implementation and make it applicable for indigenous peoples.

The investment in this appropriate and relevant education with Indigenous Peoples will surely support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals to leave no one behind.

Thank you.