

**First Meeting of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
13 to 24 May, 2002, United Nations – New York.**



**Item: General Statement.**

**Statement by Ms. Mary KUKU.**

Thank you Mr. Chairman for giving me this opportunity to speak.

Distinguished members of the Permanent Forum, Government delegates, UN representatives, Indigenous brothers and sisters, My name is Mary James KUKU, a Nuba from Nuba Mountains. I'm grateful to thank the human rights fund through the International Work Group on the Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) for their support to be here. I am submitting my intervention with a main focus of the Indigenous Peoples of the Sudan. Who have faced oppression for many years. The indigenous peoples of Sudan live in five different areas in Sudan which is Equatorial, Upper Nile and Bahar Elqazal in Southern Sudan, and Southern Kordofan ( Nuba Mountain ) and Southern Blue Nile. These areas are rich in natural resources, such as oil, gold, coffee and tea and fertile land. But as indigenous peoples, we still have no rights to those resources.

For many years the indigenous peoples of Sudan have been displaced in their own country due to the land grabbing which has resulted in a big number of refugees in neighbouring countries and all over the world. Indigenous peoples of Sudan have been victims of conflict since 1945 until now. As indigenous peoples we are struggling for our rights as peoples, but lack of education and abject poverty in the war zone of Southern Sudan Nuba Mountain and Southern Blue Nile region has almost become absolute.

Mr. Chairman, in the current political crisis in Sudan, the indigenous peoples have seriously suffered from:

- (1) Slave trade especially children and women,
- (2) Abduction and rape,
- (3) Land grabbing and displacement of the population,
- (4) Ethnic cleansing as the case of the Nuba people,
- (5) Planting of anti-personnel mines, etc.

However, Mr. Chairman the Nuba indigenous peoples appreciate the efforts being undertaken by the governments of USA and the federal republic of Switzerland to realize a humanitarian cease fire in Nuba mountains and the situation is slowly taking shape in the awareness of international community and humanitarian NGOs but more efforts are needed by international community, human rights groups and friends of indigenous peoples of Sudan to visit this area and witness the agony of the indigenous peoples in Sudan.

In my conclusion Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the indigenous peoples in Sudan, I do appeal to the international community for peace to prevail in Sudan.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.