



**The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
1st Session**

**Statement by Stella Tamang, Nepal Tamang Ghedung,
Central Committee Member**

Mr. Chair, honourable members of Permanent Forum, distinguished delegates and indigenous brothers and sisters, Pyafula!

I am Stella Tamang representing Nepal Tamang Ghedung.

First of all I would like to congratulate you for your election as Chair. I would also like to congratulate all Vice - Chairpersons^{representative} and the members of the Permanent Forum for their election. Mr. Chair, with due respect to you all, please allow me to congratulate my five sisters, the members of the UN Permanent Forum. Dear sisters, you are an honour for all the women and we are proud of you. On behalf of Nepal Tamang Peoples, I would like to offer you our fullest co-operation. At this point, Mr. Chair, I would like to ^{take this opportunity to} propose for a creation of commission on indigenous women and children under Permanent Forum.

Mr. Chair, our indigenous culture is based on mutual respect, co-existence, interdependent, egalitarian, complementary and collective values. Our culture is a sharing culture and is not a selling culture. It is unfortunate that our values are attack by the dominant economic concept of globalization which focuses and values materials. The present mainstream education systems, the various development interventions therefore are just the means that promote materialist and consumerist society where human beings are used and have no other meaning and value at all. The present conflicts, wars, terrorism, the fast degrading environment ~~crisis~~^{situation} are the clear evidence of it.

If we look at the human history, we must admit that we are in the period when human dignity is falling down. The gap between men and women is widening. The old peoples instead of being respected are now look down upon as burden and everyday ~~the happy~~ childhood is snatched from the child. The respectful relationship between human beings and nature is degrading. The human attempts to have control over mother earth and environment is becoming more and more aggressive. Humanity is in crisis and is urgently in need of solutions and measures for the future generation. Now ~~it is the time that~~ the cosmovision, wisdom, knowledge, technology and life style of indigenous peoples ~~can~~^{to} contribute to

there is increasing need and acceptance
recognition

to
heal the
damage
caused

balance the imbalances thus the indigenous peoples have a greater responsibility and role.

Mr. Chair, the establishment of Permanent Forum is indeed a moment of celebration for the indigenous peoples all over the world. It has taken a long struggle to be able to witness this day. We are happy to see that the indigenous peoples are participating in the UN system on the same basis as that of States. This is indeed a historic victory. Dear members, you are not entering alone. You are entering with the hopes of indigenous peoples who are:

- dying due to the armed conflict and wars,
 - struggling for their land, identity, culture, languages and lifestyles,
 - fighting for their right to self determination and for the indigenous individual and collective rights,
 - the hope of all the youths,
 - hope of mothers who are compelled to see their children dying because of hunger and diseases,
 - the hope of all those sisters who are sold and bought as commodity for sex and labour,
 - the hope of all those children who are compelled to hold gun instead of pen.
- May these hopes generate strength for you and give you right direction.

At the end, we would to request the Permanent Forum to make the following recommendations:

1. Recommend for the adoption of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as presented by the Sub-Commission without change or amendment; *before the end of the Decade 2004*
2. Recommend the World Summit on Sustainable Development for the adoption of a strong statement respecting the collective human rights, the fundamental freedoms and the right to self-determination of the indigenous peoples. *and also that I P are not stakeholders but holders of rights.*
3. Recommend the international development agencies that it is fundamental to require consultations with indigenous peoples and to start only with their prior, free and informed consent.
4. Recommend for the separate permanent secretariat for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, with sufficient staff and related resources to address the wide range of subjects mandated by ECOSOC on full time basis, to be staffed by indigenous and non-indigenous persons, *sufficiently* funded by the appropriated United Nations agencies, programmes, funds and related United Nations bodies, in order to function effectively.
5. Recommend to ECOSOC that the permanent forum should be mandated to get regular budget, extra budgetary means from UN as well as voluntary funding from state parties, private foundations or donations, etc.

6. Recommend to ECOSOC that the secretariat of the Permanent Forum be located in UN Head Quarter, New York, USA.
7. Recommend to ECOSOC that the next Second session of the Permanent Forum needs to be organised in Geneva at least three months before the ECOSOC meeting in July..

Mr. Chair, at the end, may I propose that if you ever think of holding meeting outside New York and Geneva, we will be very happy to offer you our place in Nepal. It is very easy to come to our country. You do not need to take an appointment one month before for visa application and you do not need to pay your one month salary as visa fee. You get visa upon arrival at the airport. I am very sad that some of our friends could not come this time because US Embassy, after inquiring their annual income, they were told that they are not rich enough to visit this country. What is very painful is the whole humiliation they have gone through. I am sorry to take this time to raise this issue but I have no other choice too. Mr. Chair, may I request you to take this visa issues seriously for future since our participation in such meeting is so crucial for us no matter where ever it is Please allow me to conclude with a Nepali saying that, *"Let there be scarcity and famine of money and materials, but not of the aspiration, determination and commitment."*

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

held half of the pkg.