

**Third Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous
Issues**

Theme: 'Indigenous Women'

Item 4 (d) Human Rights

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Thank you, Mr Chairperson for this opportunity. I am Mr Joram Useb, Hai|om from Namibia representing the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA), which is the umbrella body for all the San in the southern Africa.

In my intervention I would like to talk about the human rights violations experienced by the various groups of the San in Southern Africa. Today in the democratic States of southern Africa the San are still discriminated against and their human rights violated. In Botswana, the government has forcefully evicted the G|wi and G|lana San communities from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, which is their ancestral land. The government has cut off the basic amenities like water, education and health services. The Botswana government has provided these services outside the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), forcing the San to leave their ancestral land and move to the areas where these services are provided. The Botswana government forcefully wants to integrate the San into the mainstream society, which might have negative impact on the San for example displacement, loss of ancestral land, cultural genocide and non-recognition of San identity. It is also a well known fact that the Botswana government is in partnership with De Beers mining company. This partnership brings in the bulk of income for the Botswana government. De Beers has also secured prospecting rights to mine diamonds in the area of land belonging to the San community.

In January 2004, this year the South African police shot dead Mr Optel Rooi of the Khomani San community at Witdraai, South Africa. Mr Rooi was unarmed and was shot in the back from close range.

In Namibia the land occupied by the San communities are seen to be empty and under-utilized and the government encouraged other ethnic groups to use the land which is the only land which belongs to the !Kung and Ju|'hoansi in the Tsumkwe District. The new incomers in the San settlements have accused the San of stealing their livestock and as well as embarking upon beating up members of the San community, including women and children.

Apart from the negative aspect of human rights violations, there are also some improvements. In South Africa the government has recognized the language rights and the San got back their land, while in Namibia the government recognizes the right to mother tongue education in schools.

With the United Nations Decade on Indigenous Peoples more awareness has been created and improved monitoring, therefore I would like to urge United Nations to declare for another decade.

I would also like to urge that the governments should comply with the provisions of the international and regional Conventions to which they have adhered, such as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)

Kai ai-os Igâtes !aroma (Thank you for listening me)