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Sixth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Aqqaluk Lyngé's Response to the Reports of the Special Rapporteurs

United Nations' Headquarters
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Thank you Madame Chair,

This morning we heard some chilling reports conveyed to us by the three Special Rapporteurs. I wish to thank them for their diligent work. *We also heard accounts from indigenous representatives here today*

We heard accounts of mass rapes. We heard about domestic beatings, military ~~beatings~~ *massacres*, destitution, and the challenges of indigenous women. We heard about ways of life under attack. We heard reports of extension of plantation economies. We were told that trafficking of indigenous ~~men, and especially~~ women, was on the increase. And we were told that this was happening because they were women and because they were indigenous. We heard that the land laws of Cambodia were completely disregarded due to massive corruption and economic concessions of ancestral lands. *Mutilation and ethnic cleansing wars were spoken about*

This list went on and on and on. I have no fear of "naming and shaming", as we the Members have been told not to do. I have no fear because it seemed from the reports of the Special Rapporteurs, no country was immune from discriminating against the indigenous peoples in their midst. We were told of Mexico, Guatemala, the Philippines, Cameroon, Congo, Uganda, *Laos*, Tanzania, Canada, USA, countries in South East Asia, the Amazon, and so on. And so on.

What we heard about ~~this morning~~ *today* and what we talked about last year and the year before and the year before is about the issue of human rights. No matter what context, or through which special theme we tell our stories, and hear each others' stories, this fact remains clear: the rights of the world's indigenous peoples are being denied, forgotten, and abused. As I am entering my third year as Forum Member, this fact has never been less clear.

on the Rights of Ind. Peoples

And this is why we need a Declaration. We indigenous peoples have accepted – through so much compromise – a text, that is not even legally-binding. It's simply a declaration that we negotiated in good faith. We compromised in good faith. Now some of the states sitting here today are extolling the virtues of their constitutions and their policies towards indigenous peoples. It is these same member states that have turned their backs on us. I do not need to provide you or anyone else in this room, Madame Chair, with the definition of good faith. We all know that some members here appear to have forgotten it. *Others, I am glad, have said here today that it is important to "intensify the dialogue" and I agree.*

One fact heartens me. In spite of the human rights abuses we know continue to increase against us, we are strong. We will not bend. We will prevail.

I am glad we had the *for* *I look forward to it tomorrow.*
I look forward to the discussion ~~human rights~~ today. And ~~tomorrow~~. And next year. Let us channel our optimism, in spite of the challenges before us.

and resolve

Thank-you, Madame Chair