

Sixth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Item 9: Future Work
Joint Statement of the Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation and the
Montagnard Foundation

Speaker: Soda Luu

Madame Chair,

We are particular pleased with the development of Monday's half day session on Asia as it provided a great opportunity for the indigenous organizations, experts and governments alike to have a dialogue on issues that specifically affects us. One issue that remains a major obstacle for indigenous groups in South East Asia, such as Vietnam is the lack of recognition by governments of our claim as indigenous peoples.

We are encouraged by the comment of Special Rapporteur Mr. Stavenhagen in urging the government of Vietnam to accept the human rights situation and start using the readily available human rights instruments and mechanism to resolve such serious issues, including the recommendations by our indigenous organizations. Mr. Stavenhagen also encouraged the government of Vietnam to respond to his letters when he sends them asking for clarification on human rights situation in indigenous communities of Vietnam.

In light of the forum's future work, we would like to propose the following recommendation:

- Ask that all governments, especially the Asian governments to adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a sign of their long term commitment and respect for indigenous peoples.
- Ask that the special focus on a half day focus on Asia continue in next year's session to emphasize further focus on finding solutions for successful implementation of MDGs with the full participation of indigenous peoples.
- To have a special session to determine how far the MDGs have been reached. For example, instead of giving missionary statements, we would like the government of Vietnam to provide a more specific and concrete report on the progress of the MDGs and how indigenous peoples, if any are collaboratively involved.
- Ask that the Permanent Forum selects the special theme be climate change. At a recent United Nations University conference at UN Headquarters "Environmental Refugees: The Forgotten Migrants", Joanos Boardi, Director of the UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security noted that if the temperature increases and the water level rises, the Mekong Delta will be one foot underwater. Therefore, we believe this imminent issue should be the focus for the 7th session of the UNPFII as it attaches great importance to our peoples. We also ask to build on the work at the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples focusing on climate change and human rights.

- Request the help of the Permanent Forum members and Madame Chair to help set up a series of meeting with KKF, Montagnard Foundation and the Vietnam government so that we may begin the process of identifying our indigenous peoples in their respective areas. Only through such dialogue can the needs of our indigenous peoples become visible and the achievement of the MDGs become a collaborative effort by all.

For the last four years, Vietnam has adamantly denied our positive contribution to the Forum and rejected all our information regarding human rights violation as “groundless information” and accused us of having a political agenda. Our only agenda is human rights.

We encourage the government of Vietnam to exercise the spirit of compassion towards to our people especially towards our Buddhist monks who are thirsty for justice and peace and the right to self determination.

Thank you.