

UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

14th Session

New York, 20 April – 1 May 2015

Agenda Items 6 and 3(b) “Food, Hunger and Disease”

Presented by Leburu Andrias

Join Statement of Ngamiland Council of NGOs and Indigenous Peoples of Africa
Coordinating Committee (IPACC)

Thank you Madame Chair for giving us an opportunity to present our intervention on agenda item 6 and 3(b) on food, hunger and disease.

Madame Chair, issues related to food, hunger, and diseases are central to indigenous peoples in Africa where conditions of food security and health have remained far behind the UN Millennium Development Goals. Only by furthering the rights of indigenous peoples in the areas of land rights, food security and health can we hope to see progress in the post-2015 development goals.

Madame Chair, a common problem faced by indigenous peoples in Africa is their eviction and exclusion from lands and resources that are the basis of their food security, health, and survival. For example, the Ik peoples of North-east Uganda have been forcibly removed from their territory in the Morungole and Timu Forest and are now being prevented even from the temporary use of park resources. Similar issues have taken place in southern Africa and elsewhere.

We recommend that in the establishment of conservation areas and wildlife corridors, States abide by Article 8.2(b) and Article 10 of the UNDRIP which prohibits the forced removal of indigenous peoples from their territory, as this prevents their access to subsistence, with important consequences to their health and survival.

Even if the goal should be food self-sufficiency, **we recommend** that states, in collaboration with international, national, and local agencies, assist in providing food, water, and health services to indigenous peoples in their own territories, including territories inside national parks and game reserves, such as the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Botswana, and in the Morungole and Timu forest, Uganda.

Madame Chair, it is critically important to recognize that in some instances UN agencies implement programs that have unintended consequences for the food security of indigenous peoples. One example that I would like to draw your attention to is the nomination of the Okavango Delta as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. One of the

immediate effects of this nomination has been the prohibition of fishing and utilization of other resources of the Delta. These resources constitute the basic traditional subsistence of the San and other local communities, as well as the foundation of traditional knowledge and resources relating to health.

We recommend that the state of Botswana, consistent with Article 26 of UNDRIP, recognize the rights of indigenous peoples to their traditional territories and resources in those areas that are designated as conservation and World Heritage and cultural heritage areas, and engage in free, prior and informed consent with indigenous peoples in all conservation related initiatives.

We recommend that UNESCO and IUCN in collaboration with the state of Botswana and indigenous peoples' communities undertake a thorough review of its nomination of the Okavango Delta as a World Heritage Site and its impacts on indigenous peoples' well-being and rights to subsistence, and guarantees of full rights to traditional territories, food, and medicines.

We further recommend that similar reviews take place in all sites that are being considered for world heritage status and that mechanisms, consistent with Article 27 and Article 32 of the UN Declaration, be put into place to guarantee the free, prior and informed consent of those indigenous peoples whose territories and subsistence rights are potentially affected. These mechanisms should be in place before, during and after consideration of world heritage status.

Thank you for your attention.