

**Fifth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Item 3

Delegation: Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation

Madam Chair

One of the biggest concerns for the Khmer Krom people is the lack of consultation of the Vietnamese government with our people including the Khmers Kampuchea Krom Federation (KKF), an organization representing the Khmer Krom people in South Vietnam. The denial that the Khmer Krom people are not indigenous peoples by the Vietnamese government remains an obstacle in our self determination. KKF's work continues to be undermined and ineffective, our people disadvantaged and poorly represented with limited access to the vast resources and financial assistance that Vietnam has received from International Financial Institutions and UN specialized agencies. The KKF demands the aid pouring into Vietnam reaches the people in need and a global partnership for development is established.

- To ensure effective implementation of these goals, a two-way communication system should be installed or created between the Vietnamese government and the Indigenous Khmer Krom people in which the UN or a nominated independent organization shall act as a mediator to create a climate of conflict transformation.
- The Vietnamese government needs to work with UNESCO with the full participation of the indigenous Khmer Krom people including the KKF to create initiatives and indigenous specific programs.
- Programs that educate people about their rights and culture should be created, translated in their native language, promoted and implemented immediately to ensure indigenous people have equal access to these facilities.
- Sufficient funding needs to be allocated to combat the high child mortality rates and empowering indigenous women through UNFPA and UNIFEM.
- Programs initiated needs to be tailor specific and practical to indigenous peoples
- To ensure reports and claims are correct as reported by the Vietnamese government, the Special Rapporteur must pay a compulsory visit to Vietnam to verify the situation of Khmer Krom people on the ground in South Vietnam.
- Creditable evidence of abuse of indigenous peoples by the responsible government should be reviewed by the UN and prompt action should be taken to allow for the realization of the MDGs by the Khmer Krom.
- A detailed annual report focusing on the human rights situation on the ground should be provided to members of the forum and the indigenous peoples by the Vietnamese government so new ideas may be recommended.

I am aware there are many more speakers sharing their story of struggle in their homelands that are similar. Therefore, I will provide only one example of how the MDGs are currently not being taken seriously by the government and if we do not redefine based on indigenous indicators will result in harm to our people. The Vietnam government admits in its ethnic minorities report, which doesn't recognize us as indigenous peoples, claims Khmer have a high rate of illiteracy with poor information accessibility. This is true. However, forcing us to learn Vietnamese and only providing information not in our indigenous language will perpetuate the problem not promote a positive solution for our peoples daily enduring the harmful

policies at the hands of the government.

Madam Chair, projects needs to feasible and practical to ensure effective implementation. Specifically in our case, we implore the UN to help set up a system which allows for direct consultation with the Vietnamese government so that we as an indigenous organisations may have a more active role in our self determination.