



21<sup>st</sup> United Nation Working Group on Indigenous Populations

Geneva, July 21-25<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Item 6(b): Follow-up to the World Conference Against Racism, Xenophobia and related intolerance.

Statement by the Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the Ryukyus

Ms. Satoko Taira

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

My name is Satoko Taira, I come from Okinawa which is located between Japan and Taiwan. It is my great pleasure to make a presentation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

The most important point in the follow-up of the World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia, and related intolerance is that the governments set up the follow-up program as some UN agencies already did. Regrettably, it is not done by almost all the Governments. Thus, we propose that the respective state governments make a national report on fulfillment of the Durban Declaration and the Programme of Action in 2004 in the process of the follow-up.

As a delegate of Okinawa, I would like to touch upon the example of the US bases in my homeland and the government's responsibility in this regard. As pointed out repeatedly, 75 % of US bases in Japan are concentrated in these small islands, and there are discriminatory laws such as the Status of US Forces Agreement and the Revised Special Measures Act on Expropriation of the Land for the US base. These are cases of racial discrimination against Okinawans, and these acts by the government are against the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The issues were already pointed out in the counter-report to the Initial and Second Periodic Report of The Japanese Government Submitted to Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and the CERD recommended the government to review the above mentioned law. The Japanese government has submitted a mid-term report to the CERD, but it was not satisfactory as the government does not acknowledge the racial discrimination in Okinawa, and there were no actual plans for improvement.

We request that the Japanese government make a sincere effort towards making a

national report regarding the Durban Declaration, in which the above-mentioned discriminatory laws should be reviewed. Moreover, the issue of human rights infringement and environmental destruction by military bases is not only limited to Okinawa, but is one suffered by many indigenous peoples all over the world. In order to improve the situation, we strongly demand that the respective governments should deal with the issue of military bases on the basis of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Thank you.