

The 6th Session of United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

14- 25 May, 2007, United Nations Headquarter, New York

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Joint statement of 1. Zo-reunification Organization (ZORO)

2. Society of Zoram Vengtu 3. Bawm Social Council- Bangladesh (BSC-B)

4. Bawm-Zo Indigenous Peoples' Organization (BIPO)

Item: 9

Thank you, Respected Madam Chair for giving us the floor.

We the Zo indigenous peoples inhabiting the hill regions of South and South-East Asia, though divided we are, have the same language but little different dialects, having common trait and similar customary law practices faced untold problems, since under colonial administration 1890, till today.

Our land and territory are neglected and even now proper link-roads were yet to be constructed in our region. Basic infrastructures built up were yet to come and now as it is, we are outreached area, only footpath and jungle trail are our communication, remaining till today.

However, non-indigenous peoples are now interested to survey our land to extract our natural resources but only to utilize for their ends. Say, Kaptai dam constructed in East Pakistan (Bangladesh) 1964 forced out the indigenous peoples to become refugee in their own land. The projects for construction of Dams, Tuirial, Tuivai and Tuipaimuk (northern- Mizoram, India) will again causing similar disastrous consequence to the Zo indigenous people living therein.

In order that the indigenous peoples of the world, including Zo indigenous people may also survive but not perished, we suggest the following:

That this UN-PFII should impress upon the World Body to ensure:

1. Adoption of the UNDD without amendment, as immediately as possible.
2. Establishment of permanent sovereignty of Indigenous peoples over their land and resources.
3. Rectification of the past errors of territorial divisions that had been done during colonial periods including those who had later acquired by the new colonisers.
4. Opening comprehensive self-determination to all Indigenous peoples of the world including Zo people.
5. Basic infrastructures built up should be given priorities, particularly in the territories of outreach indigenous peoples, but without land alienation so that MDGs could also be implemented in those territories.
6. Extraction of oil, gas and other natural resources within the territories of the indigenous peoples should be done only on a benefit sharing basis with a fair rental money and royalty in the land utilized for the execution of the projects.
7. Any type of development agenda but that would forced out the indigenous peoples from their ancestral land losing their traditional way of earning their livelihood should be stopped on the instant.
8. Lands, forcibly occupied by Governments and militaries in the territories of the indigenous peoples should be restituted.
9. Social and cultural developments should be promoted and customary law practices should be encouraged to enliven the sanctity of the indigenous peoples.
10. In order to implement the above mention points the UN system be adapted and inclusive for the execution of the points in the future works of the Forum.

Thank you Madam Chair.