

STATEMENT

We shall step forward hand in hand with Brothers and Sisters.

We, Ainu National Congress, would like to send our warmest praise to all of the fellow people who are attending at the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples established by UN Human Rights Commission. Because of your supports, we, the Ainu people, have got the opportunity to draft a New Law for the Ainu people in Japan. The report which we present today is the one submitted on April 1st, 1996 to the Chief Secretary of the Cabinet by the Conference of the Well Informed on Measures for the Ainu people which had deliberated the basic idea for the new development of the measures for the Ainu people for almost 1 year. You will find epoch making gains of us in the report, though it also has very disadvantageous and discriminatory points.

1) Japanese government recognized the indigenouness of the Ainu people only in the northern part of Japan, though some Ainu fellows complain about it. And the report regards our ancestral domain as the territory of Japan. It sounds as their real intention, very bad plot for us, trying to barter the new law for giving up the right to the ancestral land.

2) With regard to the collective rights of ethnic group, the government recognized that "The Ainu people in our state should be expected to retain their individuality as an ethnic group basing on their ethnic pride and dignity, and it is unlikely that they will lose it in near future." We hope, as long as Japanese government accepted the report, Japanese government should not oppose against the collective rights of indigenous peoples which are described in the draft of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

3) With regard to the right of self-determination, the report and Japanese government completely deny it. They are quite afraid of declaration of independence by the Ainu people. Japanese government has no intention to pay the charge of using our land and compensate their grabbing of natural resources. This is based on the idea that all the things which were grabbed by violence, invasion, and war are to belong to the winner, and it is unnecessary to pay even 1 yen or 1 square meter to the loser or those who were conquered.

4) What we would like to value among the content of the report is the description about indigenous rights. We would like to value the point that the report clearly states that the development of the new measures might be the concrete way to answer the demands based on the indigenous rights. The reason why we valued the report so high is the clear statement that the new development of the new measures should be prepared basing on the indigenous rights.

As we valued the point 4 and accepted the report. We are not satisfied with its descriptions about rights for self-determination, land, resources, autonomy, and independence. Both of Hokkaido Ainu Association and Ainu National Congress have already confirmed to initiate a new movement/activities for those rights, as soon as the UN Declaration of Rights on Indigenous Peoples would be ratified in the UN Assembly.

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