

Association of Indigenous Peoples in the Ryukyus (AIPR)

Statement to the 23rd United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations
Geneva, Switzerland
July 18~22, 2005

Item 7(c) *The human rights situation of Indigenous peoples in States and territories threatened with extinction for environmental reasons.*

The Association of Indigenous Peoples in the Ryukyus strongly supports the WGIP in addressing the serious problem, so-called sinking states, which is an unprecedented challenge facing Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific and Caribbean islands.

Indigenous Peoples must not get extinct due to ecocidal practices by multinational corporations and industrial states. We Okinawans especially would like to object to the CO2 policies of Japan and United States, which are among the countries emitting much more CO2 in the world: Japan emits 5% and US 24% (as of 2000), which are quite high percentages as being pointed out in the Kyoto protocol.

The causes of CO2 emitted in these two countries are mainly urban construction and industrial activities, in addition to thousands of vehicles flooded in cities. It is needless to say that these problems have serious impacts on such indigenous territories as Tuvalu and Caribbean states.

We see the structure of the problem is quite similar to the one Okinawa is suffering from. The discriminatory policies imposed on Okinawa, which have generated many problems due to the presence of US military, are enhanced by the violent behaviour of US military and the Japanese government, which often give a tacit consent to the problem. We cannot help feeling sympathy to such states as Tuvalu that are in danger of extinction due to the egoistic and discriminatory policies of superpower countries. We also should not forget that the global warming not only causes some states to sink but also has had impacts on the traditional way of fishing, including aquaculture, causing the rise of the ocean surface throughout the world. It is important to point out that the victims of the global warming will not be limited to indigenous peoples but a threat to the entire population of the world. We therefore demand the WGIP include this issue in the agenda items and implement our suggestions we submitted last year at this meeting. Those are:

- Sponsor a seminar to categorize Indigenous peoples facing urgent catastrophe as well as impending circumstances.
- Compile thorough and quantifiable documentation of the problems associated with rising sea levels.
- Encourage regional cooperation through activating existing mechanisms in affected areas of the Pacific and Caribbean.
- Hold a seminar in these affected regions in order to allow Indigenous peoples to speak and share perspectives on challenges associated with rising sea levels including legal issues as well as Indigenous peoples' values

and visions of their states.

- Recommend repeatedly to Japan and the US to reduce their CO2 emission.

Thank you, chairperson.