

PTB Shoushan 2013

الجمعية الاشورية الخيرية العراق
ASSYRIAN AID SOCIETY – IRAQ



Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Submitted on behalf of Assyrian Aid Society-Iraq

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Item 8

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Mr. Chair,
Honorable indigenous brothers and sisters and the indigenous people of this land

Shlama Loukhoon/Good Afternoon!

1. My name is Shoushan Tower and I am representing the Assyrian Aid Society of Iraq, a humanitarian organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Assyrian culture and heritage.

In reference to Madam Amina Mohammed and the Panelist from Italy regarding empowerment, implementation and “hitting the ground running” when we are considering the 2015 Millennium Development Goals, we are here as the indigenous people of a region that is in desperate need of consideration. We would hope that by the end of this forum, our passion has been communicated and we will be included in the MDG’s agenda. Not just for the sake of the indigenous Assyrians of Iraq but the sake of all the indigenous people of that region.

The Assyrian Aid Society -Iraq has been established since 1991, there has been a need for AAS to continue to respond to crises that surrounded the Northern Iraq region. During these periods AAS had a need to establish relief programs and rebuild destroyed villages, as this was the consequence prior to 1991 where most of the destruction of these villages occurred. And since then AAS charitable work has increased dramatically due to the destruction of these villages, which extended to include activities by providing funds to:

- Assyrian Education including Dormitories and providing transport.
- Agriculture - including irrigation systems and reviving destroyed farm land

After 2003 war in Iraq, AAS burden and its responsibilities to the Assyrian communities further intensified mainly to economic hardship especially in Nineveh Plains, Kirkuk and Baghdad.

In 2006 AAS provided monetary assistance for relief programs to the internally displaced people who fled from their cities, towns and villages to safer areas within Iraq. AAS relies upon Funds provided to support these activities mainly from AAS in America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Germany, Sweden & United Kingdom, as well as other Assyrian organizations around the globe including funds from Non-Assyrian organizations.

Assyrian Aid Society has huge burdens with its ongoing struggle in keeping up with all its activities in order to aid the Assyrian communities in Iraq. Therefore, the funding situation doesn't fulfill the necessary day-to-day demands and the survival of the Assyrian communities has become a need far beyond the means of the Assyrian Aid Society. Madam Joan Carling mentioned the disconnect between the global agenda and the actual people on the ground...this applies directly to the indigenous Assyrian.

The reason for requesting the inclusion of Assyrians in the MDG 2015 is to help us preserve and prosper and prevent the extinction by:-

- Supporting the Assyrian Education and transportation needs .
- Preparing to respond to the current crises in Syria, where hundreds of Assyrians are returning to Iraq seeking refuge.
- Rebuild destroyed villages and its roads to enable the return of the original inhabitants.
- Continue to aid farmers, various projects and build irrigation systems.
- Creating job opportunities for internal displaced people, women and recent university graduates.

In conclusion, the ongoing assistance provided by AAS continues to preserve the language and culture of the Assyrian people living in Iraq. In the event we acquire such representation from the United Nations, we will not only be able to improve the lives of Assyrians in Iraq, but this will insure the continuity of this ancient culture. Additionally this will help to reduce migration of Assyrians from their homeland.

Thank you