

UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
4th Session, 11–15 July 2011, Geneva, Switzerland
Item 5: UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Consultative Delegation for Cham Human Rights Issues
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STATEMENT

Dear Chair, Representatives, & Delegates;

Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to speak here on behalf of **Consultative Delegation for Cham Human Rights Issues**, an organization representing the Cham people.

The Cham used to have a powerful and independent nation in human history and had the flourished culture in South East Asia. The Cham lost an own State in Vietnam, and they were transformed from a nation into a stateless people, from the indigenous people of Champa into an ethnic minority of Viet Nam. The Cham have been subject to pressure to assimilate to Vietnamese society.

Currently **The Cham** is mainly concentrated in **Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos & Hainan Island (China)** with the status as minority ethnic communities.

Consultative Delegation for Cham Human Rights Issues is based in Sweden as a human rights research, reporting, educating, protection, and promotion organization. It focuses on promoting Cham human rights and rights to development, as well as on raising awareness of human rights issues among Cham people in Southeast Asian countries.

This statement is on our demands to the Vietnamese government in relation to the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Firstly, we welcome the Vietnamese government for voting in favor of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations General Assembly.

However, the Vietnamese government has not yet recognized Cham as an indigenous people.

We make the following recommendations:

1. We request the Vietnamese government to acknowledge Cham as an indigenous people and pass legislation to recognize indigenous rights for Cham to facilitate implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Vietnam and establish a national level deliberative organization to implement comprehensive measures at a national level.

2. We request the EMRIP to recommend that the Vietnamese government repeal its reservations made after the adoption of UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

3. We request the EMRIP to recommend that the UN agencies provide the capacity building for the Cham indigenous people in order to help their effective use of UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at a national level through the mobilization of the financial cooperation and technical assistance as determined under Articles 41 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

4. We request the EMRIP to recommend that the UN agencies provide advice and technical assistance to the ASEAN member-countries in order to promote the national implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the policymaking in accordance with individual country circumstances as determined under Articles 42 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We would like to end our statement by sincerely thanking the Chair and the Delegates for taking their time to listen and for your attention!

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**The Cham National Federation of Cambodia
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S T A T E M E N T

Dear Chair, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to speak here on behalf of **the Cham National Federation of Cambodia**.

We are the representative of the Cham people from Cambodia, and we are going to present some important issues of Cham people in this occasion.

The Cham people are an ancient civilisation living in Cambodia. According to historic data, they are descendants of refugees from the ancient kingdom of Champa who fled central Vietnam 500 years ago.

The ancient Cham were heavily influenced by India, as can be seen in their religion and art. Cham were fishermen, rice cultivators, and masters at temple construction. The remains of their religious monuments dot the landscape of Vietnam and Cambodia today.

From the sixteenth century on, the great Champa kingdom was gone. The Cham people were being persecuted and murdered by the Vietnamese. Numerous Cham fled central Vietnam for Cambodia, including a number of nobles and other dignitaries. Sometime in the seventeenth century the Cham were converted to Islam.

In the twentieth century, the Cham were again the victims of massacre by the majority population, this time in Cambodia. From 1975 to 1979, Cambodia was ruled by the Khmer Rouge, communist extremists determined to erase all non-Khmer characteristics from the population. The Cham are believed to have been special targets of the Khmer Rouge.

The preservation of the Cham national culture and protection of Cham human rights – the main part of the existence of **the Cham National Federation of Cambodia**, and exactly this necessity served to the creation of **the Cham National Federation of Cambodia** in 2003.

The aim of the **Cham National Federation of Cambodia** is: "Reviving, Preserving and Strengthening Cham Life in Cambodia". We are working towards revitalization and spread of the history, culture, costume, tradition, education, language and livelihood of our Cham people in Cambodia.

We consider that at the present moment there are four major objectives:

The preservation of the Cham national culture

The support of the Cham people

The receipt of financial and economic aid

The political and judicial protection

All above objectives could be achieved with international help.

This statement is on our demand to the Cambodian government in relation to the adoption of *the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Firstly, we welcome the Cambodian government for voting in favour of *the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* at the United Nations General Assembly.

However, the Cambodian government has not yet recognized Cham as an indigenous people in Cambodia, on the ground that the **United Nations** has not offered unambiguous definition of indigenous peoples.

In order to improve the situation of the Cham indigenous population in Cambodia and the international standards setting, we propose the following:

1. We call upon the EMRIP to urge the Cambodian government to recognize indigenous peoples' rights for Cham to facilitate implementation of *the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in Cambodia and establish a national level deliberative organization to implement comprehensive measures at a national level.
2. We request the EMRIP to recommend that the UN agencies provide the capacity building for the Cham indigenous people of Cambodia in order to help their effective use of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* at a national level through the mobilization of the financial cooperation and technical assistance as determined under Articles 41 of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.
3. We request the EMRIP to recommend that the UN agencies provide the advise and technical assistance to the Cambodian government in order to promote the national implementation of *the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the policymaking in accordance with country circumstance of Cambodia as determined under Articles 42 of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

We thank you for your kind attention!