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E/C.19/2004/CRP.9
5 May 2004
English only

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Third session
New York, 10-21 May 2004
Item 3 of the provisional agenda
Substantive theme: "Indigenous women"

- As I present here today
am sad to say that a
number of African indigenous
women who have had
already finding to come
have not made it yet
because of visa problem

DP
suprem

**NAIROBI DECLARATION
OF THE
2ND AFRICAN INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S CONFERENCE**

- Sudan
- Cameroon
- Burkina Faso

- Swedbio for the support
- Secretariate of the PF - for support +
ensuring that this document is made a conference document

On the closing year of the UN Decade for Indigenous Peoples, we the participants of the 2nd African Indigenous Women's Conference affirm our vital role in advancing the struggles of our Indigenous and hunter gathers Peoples of Africa for social, political, self-determination and peace. We respect and value our diversity, traditional knowledge and our solidarity working to renew our historic identities.

Our continent of Africa at the turn of the 21st century, has had the worst conflicts in any written history, poverty, HIV/AIDS effects of climatical changes due to the destruction of our natural resources that have left the desert encroaching in almost each country in the continent. The powerful forces of globalization and development aggression have continued violating our inherent rights and fundamental freedoms and threatening our very survival as distinct peoples in our society. As women, with our children and Indigenous Peoples we have suffered multiple burdens, marginalization, cultural, religious, development and gender discrimination.

1. Kenya
2. Tanzania
3. Uganda
4. Sudan
5. Ethiopia
6. Malawi
7. Burundi
8. DRC
9. Cameroon
10. Nigeria
11. Niger
12. Burkina Faso
13. Mali
14. Chad
- 15.

We have met here in Nairobi Kenya from 13th to 17th of April 2004, 125 Indigenous Women from 15 African Countries, to take stock of our situation as Indigenous women, and commit ourselves to the fullest exercise of our rights towards self-determination, non-discrimination and equality for us, our children, our communities and all peoples of the world.

At this second conference, we bear testimony to the following problems and issues:

Al

Exploitation of our Biodiversity and traditional knowledge, denial of our basic human rights, poor health facilities and the spread of HIV/AIDS among our Indigenous Peoples, lack of information and participation, Globalization which has open door to privatization and commercialization of land, water and the natural resources in Indigenous Peoples lands, that have led to Conflict and Poverty among Indigenous Women, Hunter gathers and Indigenous Peoples of Africa.

Biodiversity and traditional Knowledge

- Our knowledge of biodiversity and natural resource management is systematically exploited, appropriated or eroded. The rights of ownership on Indigenous medicine that are harvested from indigenous forests be recognized and given opportunity to be partner and a price controller on the medicine generated from the environment.

• Indigenous woman have great knowledge in biodiversity, in order to control what is be taken out of their lands with out any prior informed consent of the community, they should be involved in research activities, consulted in identifying the roots and plants that are transmitted for farther tests and release, into the international markets.

• Piracy of indigenous arts, crafts and medicines is rampant and is facilitated by patents and other western intellectual property rights. African Indigenous Women's Organization should try to resource financial assistance to help the community based organizations on the ground to enable them protecting and conserving the traditional knowledge they have and protect the traditional medicine and other items sustainably.

- There has been for many years negative information misconceived by other communities and other religions that traditional medicine practitioners are not seen as witchcraft practitioners. This should be looked positively and indigenous Women should be encouraged not to give up.

• There is need for Indigenous Women's participants in all forums local, national regional and international levels. This helps to revise policies that do not recognize Indigenous Peoples particularly those that jeopardizes the survival of Indigenous peoples way of life at the same time interfere with the survival and conservation of natural resources

- The African indigenous women's organization conference play a central role in helping local women groups /CBOs to identify herbal plants, market

for them and control illegal poaching of plants use of available and vital plants. Sensitize and encourage local Indigenous Peoples to identify and preserve herbal plants within their locality.

- Population increase, illegal logging, private concessions, monoculture plantations and agribusiness ventures are depriving Indigenous Peoples of lands and livelihoods and seriously eroding our rights. This has caused a lot of conflict in many countries where Indigenous Peoples live. They have been misplaced and rendered homeless to make way for the harvest of their natural resources,

• Climate change that have caused frequent droughts, have increased desperation on more tree cutting for energy use accelerating more problems and poverty and further encouragement of the desert. The loss of lands, waters and forests is deepening the poverty of indigenous women while increasing their domestic loads and subsistence responsibilities. Indigenous women have to work harder and longer to feed and nurture our families. There is a need to encourage other alternative use of energy in order to protecting the disappearing forest.

- Knowledge held by our elders should be carefully protected and efforts to encourage them to share their knowledge with their loved ones ~~are~~ ^{is} ~~important in order to have~~ continuity. A better and protected way of documenting that knowledge should be further discussed and success stories should be sought from other Indigenous Peoples Organizations for the sake of ensuring collective intellectual property rights that exist within the community.
- Lack of awareness, on Intellectual property rights and the guidelines in the convention on Biological Diversity especially the article 8j and its related provisions has caused the disappearance of vital plants and knowledge to foreigners there is need to begin a process of capacity training on the convention so that ~~they~~ can be a better understanding on the protection of our knowledge.
- National Parks and Protected Areas have displaced indigenous communities, expropriating our lands and denying access to the natural resources critical for livelihoods and survival. Indigenous Women's role in these areas should be recognized. They have played a great role in the protection of the flora and fauna in it. They could improve their livelihood by having income generating activities in and around protected areas and important so is by including them in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- In Africa, current forms of tourism make Indigenous Peoples and women objects of curiosity, display and commercialization. Prostitution has increased, alongside the inducement to commercialise indigenous cultural heritages. Tourism is breeding cash dependence and thus eroding our Traditions and culture.

Human Rights

- Human rights are the natural fundamental rights that are necessary for basic need of life. The denial of the rights of Indigenous Peoples to physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual survival, affects our health and wellbeing as Indigenous Women, our children and our communities.
- Indigenous women in Africa face many barriers to the access of education, healthcare and sanitation, and other basic services and are excluded from decision-making on programmes to meet these needs and entitlements. Women are marginalized by cultures of patriarchy and violence, which confine women to the domestic sphere.
- Conflict in Africa and the establishment of military detachments in our communities has curtailed our movement and economic activities, the entry of food supplies, health services and other basic social services and even disrupted the education of our children and the well being of our communities.
- Forced displacement of Indigenous Peoples from our ancestral lands is a major cause of impoverishment and threatens our very survival as Indigenous peoples. Indigenous women and children are the most seriously harmed denying the right to our lands and living peacefully.
- Lack of funds for Indigenous Women's to participate effectively in all forums on human rights will continue to deny them a voice to their rights and a process should be put in place to have continues training , information sharing and awareness on human rights which have hampered our progress and advancement for a decade,
- Every human being has a right to a region and worship, unfortunately in some countries in Africa, Indigenous Peoples have gone through a lot of human rights abuses and denial of basic human rights because of not belonging to a certain religion and culture, Indigenous women and children have been more vulnerable.

- Lack of maintenance and access to matrimonial property has made the indigenous woman be the poorest of the poor due to denial of rights to property and freedom to choose. There is need to sensitize the community and indigenous peoples to refocus on the need to give the indigenous women and girl the right to inherit and own property.
- Lack of education for the girl child has been a big problem and there is need to ensure awareness creation and information on need for education of girl child as a basic human right. Lack of education has caused poverty, early marriages and continuous marginalization of indigenous women in development.
- The African Indigenous Woman has no freedom to participate in decision making even at family and community and this has caused the right to free expression and many at times cannot even give any information in case of any violence against her.
- There is a need to give information about CEDAW and other conventions that look into the rights of women. Most of the Indigenous Women have no idea about the Beijing process they have never been fully involved.
- Right to education, freedom to choose and rights to health and other basic needs have hampered the progress and advancement of the Indigenous child, There is need to create awareness of the rights of the child and human rights that affect child.

Reproductive health

- Women, provide the first environment of every human being. Today in Africa, indigenous women's health is under threat access to health facilities, sanitation and a right to say no to negative cultural practices have continued to be the order of the day and have at an advance rate affected her health and well being as a women.
- Changes in the traditional social, cultural and political institutions and practices have led to a loss of practices, culturally appropriate health, rules and codes of behaviors which have long been instruments in ensuring gender-sensitive structures.
- The introduction of western education and religion, and the imposition of alien leadership structures has undermined the role of our indigenous women spiritual leaders and healers, who have provided moral and spiritual guidance through generations, and who were often part of decision-making structures in our communities

- The negative cultural practices like female genital mutilation, child early marriages and the right to decide on your spouse in marriage have become a threat to Indigenous women and youth due to increase of HIV/AIDS. A need for increase in information dissemination awareness creation on HIV/AIDS and negative cultural practices is very crucial.
- Health institutions, services and research, threats to indigenous traditional medicine and traditional healer like the traditional birth attendants have continued to threaten the survival of Indigenous peoples and especially women and children. Poverty cannot allow them to visit modern clinics which most of the time are miles away nor afford the modern medicine.

Our commitments;

We commit ourselves to build a strong and cohesive African Indigenous Women's Organization and continue our work to strengthen our organization's solidarity linkages, build our awareness and sustain our campaigns against development aggression and marginalization.

We will work to unify and educate women, children and youth in our communities about our cultures and identity as the basis of our struggles and rights to land, and resources.

We recognize and respect indigenous women's contributions to peace building and conflict resolution. We will work towards engender indigenous conflict resolution and peace-building processes and ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous women and youth in peace processes and accords entered into by our people and communities.

Empower indigenous women and youth to exercise our life skills, in health, education and decision-making and to play our important roles in our families, communities and the indigenous peoples' movement.

Strengthen indigenous women's participation in all aspects of leadership and governance. Select together our training needs and set other training courses and exposure programmes.

Indigenous Women will be encouraged to take up decision-making positions, after gaining the necessary confidence. A right to our voice will be the driving motivation in order to fight the perception of that only the stereotypes and only those qualified and experienced should be selected as leaders.

We commit ourselves to work and support in solidarity the work and movements of other Indigenous Peoples movements, work and progress. We will consult and seek advice and directions to our elders and work towards the advancements of Indigenous Women, Youth and Peoples Worldwide.

We will work towards the success of the millennium goals and work in partnership with key players for the development of indigenous peoples and the advancement of Indigenous Women and Youth.

Recommendations

HIV/ AIDS HEALTH

- Health centers should be provided to care for the indigenous women and children. And that, the centers be equipped with vaccines needed for the welfare and better growth of indigenous children
- Create awareness on the issue of HIV/AIDS among the Indigenous Peoples and especially women and youth who have been hard hit.
- Governments and donors should give financial support to Indigenous Women's organizations to create awareness and fight HIV/AIDS.
 - Sensitize and inform the Indigenous women to safeguard her health by taking precautions and making sure they fight the negative cultural practices.
- Provision of training Traditional Birth Attendance to use better equipment in material care. Is very crucial as they deliver 90% of children in the Indigenous Peoples communities.
 - Programs that will help to disseminate information exchange on both. Mother and Child health.
 - Make deliberate efforts to safeguard water sources in Indigenous Peoples areas and ensure the availability and safe and sanitation
 - Create linkages with the existing centers or hospitals to cater for the indigenous women's children and encourage to have community health workers to assist in home based care for the sick especially HIV/AIDS victims, and community pharmacies should be put in place..

EDUCATION/ CULTURE;

- We urge governments to design and approve curriculum for Indigenous People's education and ensure that the free primary education is implemented.
 - Child labor especially in mining areas should be totally discouraged and abolished and where it exist because of poverty governments should asst

the families to ensure alternatives are given to allow education for the children.

- We lobby for the policies that would favor the girl -child education.
- A need to create awareness through the media to send our indigenous children to go to school
- Governments should recognize and support the creation and introduction of mobile schools for Indigenous Peoples and especially for Nomadic pastoralists.
- To empower indigenous women economically, through of IGAs to uplift the standard of Education in their various communities.
- States to recognize and respect culture, religious and linguistic diversity of indigenous peoples and local communities and encourage the use, documentation and learning in early childhood facilities and ensure its continued and preservation.
- We also urge governments to design policies to protect the Indigenous Peoples from harmful Traditional practices in Education. Encourage the education of the girl child and promote and support the adult education for both the youth and women.

ENVIRONMENT;

- Sensitize and create awareness on the need for Indigenous Peoples and their local communities to recognize the need to protect the remaining natural resources from which indigenous communities draw their livelihoods.
- Participation in the United Nations Conventions and other environmental forums is very important to ensure the continuity and more knowledge on Environmental conservation.
- The convention on Biological Diversity is very crucial to our traditional knowledge and our cultural survival as Indigenous peoples and women, there is need to start activities towards the awareness on article 8j and its provision in the convention which are very important to our daily lives.
- ~~Pressure and~~ enhance indigenous knowledge on medicinal plants within the indigenous Peoples lands and encourage the women groups to start small projects to plant and open small community museums to store the lost traditional and cultural artifacts that are disappearing.
- Indigenous women to discourage all those policies that destruct and destroy the environments
 - Enhance the role and participation of indigenous women on the management of ecosystem, e.g protected areas and forests
- Governments and other key players should assist in the strengthening the capacity of Indigenous Peoples, especially Indigenous women and youth in conserving the natural resources and involve them fully in Policy formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

- There should be a system of documenting and publishing indigenous plants and trees and ensure clear knowledge and need to protect that knowledge from public domain.
- Elders should be encouraged to share and transfer the knowledge they hold by training them the need to keep and protect in for the young and future generation.
- Indigenous peoples, Women and youth should be trained and given information on intellection property rights, prior informed consent and their rights in sharing benefits from what is accrued in their lands and territories.
- Working and sharing among Indigenous peoples from other regions is very important in order to get more skills in different environmental conservation and the protection of the rights and property collectively as indigenous peoples.

CONFLICT

- Governments should recognize the crucial role played by Indigenous women in conflict resolution and peace building processes and include them in all the process at all levels.
 - Indigenous Women should be encouraged and supported to in their role in installing and creating a culture of peace from the family to higher levels especially in schools and colleges where our values have gone so down and causing conflict.
- Training indigenous Women on conflict resolution should be enhanced and establish a broad base forums for peace and development.
 - Indigenous Women should be assisted and supported in creating organizations for peace initiative to protect their interests in conflict prone areas
- Governments and key players in Conflict resolution should recognize, safeguard, encourage and exploit and encourage Indigenous conflict management institution and skills in the community

Communication and Networking;

- Transparency and exchange of information among indigenous Women should be enhances and funds should be sort to put in place communication and networking means for the communities.
 - Communication among Indigenous women leaders from different regions and different countries should be encouraged . Members to be active themselves so that they are not left out.
- Need for strong Networking among the regions to ensure continuity and information flow.