

# **STATEMENT ON THE DRAFT UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

**On Thursday 3rd August 2006  
(Geneva)**

**By Mainyoito Pastoralist Integrated Development Organization  
(MPIDO)**

On behalf of the Maasai indigenous peoples we wish to register our collective appreciation to the United Nations Human Rights Council for reaching a landmark decision on the promotion and protection of Indigenous Peoples by adopting the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples that acknowledges indigenous peoples existence, uniqueness and challenges confronting their daily issues.

We appreciate specifically one of the key recommendations in the draft declaration that acknowledges the need for redress of historical injustices and that there is no development that shall be undertaken in indigenous peoples territories without prior and formal consent as well as the call for control of land and natural resources by indigenous peoples, and the right to self determination which shall enable indigenous peoples to make decisions according to what they feel is good for them.

As indigenous peoples from Africa, we want to salute African nations led by South Africa and Zambia and other countries from the European Union, Latin America and Arab countries for their relentless support for the draft declaration. We urge the same governments to offer total support for the adoption of the draft declaration during the next general meeting in New York as will be a key achievement for the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Decade of the world's indigenous peoples.

The step taken by the United Nations is in the right direction as it shall motivate African nations to develop mechanisms and instruments for the promotion and protection of the rights of all indigenous peoples in the continent. This decision is timely as it has been made before the United Nations special rapporteur for the rights of indigenous peoples makes an official visit to the republic of Kenya before the end this year which again is a resonant confirmation of the United Nation's commitment in tackling the critical challenges faced by indigenous peoples in Kenya.

In a nutshell, we call for close collaboration between the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, the United Nations special rapporteur for the rights of indigenous peoples, the continent's human rights organizations and indigenous peoples to develop joint programmes and strategies that shall enable indigenous peoples to participate fully on issues affecting them and benefit from the United Nations' programmes so that Indigenous peoples are incorporated which in the longer terry: will enable their! to conquer povPr<sup>7</sup>, exclusion, marginalization and injustices.

We also wish to register our appreciation for the collaboration between MPIDO and the European Union that has enabled individuals from the Maasai indigenous peoples to participate in several United Nations meetings including this one.