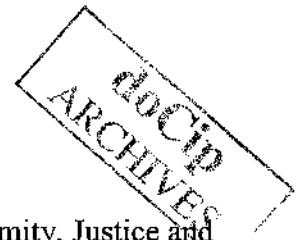


UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Third Session

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Joint statement by
Fr. Joseph Gomes OMI
For

Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum, Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samity, Justice and
Peace Integration of Creation, Bangladesh



Agenda Item 5 : Future work of the Forum

My name is Fr. Joseph Gomes and I am representing Justice and Peace Integration of Creation, Bangladesh and we work with Khasi, Garo and other indigenous peoples living in the Tea Estates in north-eastern part of Bangladesh.

Mr. Chairman, indigenous peoples are the main victims of human rights violations all over the world. They are under heavy pressure from developments beyond their control. In many regions, they have been facing an uncertain future and their livelihood, languages, traditions, cultural diversity are constantly under threat. So, the Permanent Forum should have a vital role to guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples to their entire life. It should be ensured that indigenous peoples are controlling their own development.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we would urge the Permanent Forum to consider the following matters:

- Encourage States and UN agencies, financial institutions and other specialised bodies to take special measures in relation to indigenous issues so that indigenous peoples are really benefited on those areas such as economic and social development, culture, education, environment, health and human rights;
- Encourage States and UN specialised agencies to formulate special policies for indigenous peoples that affirm their cultural identity and right to self-determination;
- Urge States and development actors to ensure full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and to abide by the principle of Free, Prior and Informed consent in all kinds of development activities in indigenous peoples areas.

Thank you.
May 20, 2004