



FOUNDATION TUNASARAPA SURINAM

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UNITED NATIONS
Working Group on Indigenous Populations
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ORAL INTERVENTION OF 'TUNASARAPA SURINAM'

Mrs. Chairperson,

For the clarity of our presentation today : Surinam is in Latin America and it has borders with French Guyana (in the Eastern), with Guyana (in the West), with Brazil (in the South and in the North at the Atlantic Ocean).

The indigenous populations in Surinam are about 16:000 individuals, and it is composed of the peoples of Kalinja, Lokono, Trio and Wajana. I myself am a member of the Lokono people.

The Foundation 'Tunasarapa Surinam' is the only organization which has integrated the cooperation between the Kalinja and the Lokono is her own constituency. For this reason I present this intervention on behalf of our both peoples.

Mrs. Chairperson,

The conquest of Surinam by the Dutch in 1667 constituted also the beginning of the immigration of other human beings from other parts of the world : Negroes from Africa, Chinese, Hindustani's and Javanese from Asia. At present the number of inhabitants in Surinam is more than 400:000.

The conquest has been achieved, and could be perpetuated, with massacre, slavery, economic and cultural destructions. In the latter the Christianity has plaid and plays a significant role.

In 1686 a treaty was signed between the indigenous peoples and the colonial occupiers, in which the location of the latter was decided upon. Nevertheless it has never been introduced in the law that we, the original populations of Surinam, could consider a particular territory as ours. On the contrary. In a reglement dated 1937 it is clearly stated that the indigenous Surinamese have some rights based on their traditions, but that these rights and their property were not equal with the rights guaranteed in the civil code.

This implies that at any moment the Governmental administration may dispose of the land inside the whole country. Here are some examples :

1. During the Second World War an airport has to be built-up for the American bombers, in order secure the Western interests (bauxite). A village of indigenous populations, Bisri, has been evacuated, with violence, and no single compensation was offered.

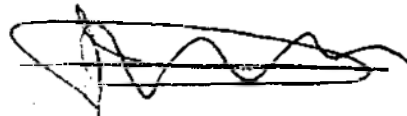
2. In the 50's the Dutch paper factory Van Gelder wanted to plant trees for the production of paper in the Netherlands. The most adequate land was found in the surroundings of the villages of Cassipora and Jodensavanne. Just in these villages there was a certain autonomy and a limited land policy. In order to realize the planting project, the Dutch firm Van Gelder would have had to negotiate with the indigenous populations. But the populations were forced to bargain their fruitful land with marshy ground. The promise was made that the necessary facilities would be placed in these villages. But, so far, a large part of this commitment has not been respected.
3. In the 70's the Government gave land plots along the Marowijne River to many political friends from the capital. Thus Pierrehondre, an indigenous village in the Northern of Albina, was almost reduced by half. Slowly but surely the same sad lot was going to happen to the villages of Christiaanhondre and Bigiston.
4. In 1975 the Netherlands granted the independence to Surinam without consulting with the indigenous and original populations.

Mrs. Chairperson,

For all these reasons, we, the indigenous peoples of Surinam, request the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations to undertake all the necessary steps, so that the Government of Surinam finally respects the Treaty of 1686.

Geneva, August 2/1988

Namens TUNASARAPA SURINAM,
Delgado WOLFF



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