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STRUCTURAL
ANALYSIS OF
CULTURAL
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Statement

Indigenous Peoples and Conflict Resolution

Thank you, Mr. Chairman:

With regard to this year's theme - "Indigenous Peoples and Conflict Resolution" – I would like to briefly mention some relevant aspects resulting from culture-related research. Conflicts that affect indigenous peoples are generally brought about by external parties with more effective resources in terms of weapons or political power. It is therefore quite certain that by being involved, the indigenous people are going to be victims of the conflict, anyway. But the effects of being exposed to dominance continue even under conditions of intervention aiming at conflict resolution and humanitarian aid. The ways these interventions are carried out are usually not very sensitive towards the indigenous cultures concerned. While focussing merely on the physical existence, industrial cultural elements are being transferred that replace and delete indigenous cultural elements. Thereby, the identity of those individuals struck by flight and distress is being further destabilised. Even when indigenous people can be saved from such a situation physically, they will be subject to sociocide; their culture will suffer irreversibly. Interventions concerning indigenous peoples, even when done with the best intentions, can accelerate the cultural loss, which comprises not only the loss of specific life-styles, but also the loss of valuable knowledge. Therefore, in order to counteract this loss that humankind is suffering, it is apparently necessary to acknowledge culture as a value *per se*. In practice, this means that culturally specific and sensitive implementation of intervention and aid are just as important as the prevention of conflicts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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