

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**13<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

**Statement by Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC)**

*Presented by Jemimah Lemerketo Chepleting*

Thank you Madame Chair. All the Indigenous peoples gathered here will agree with the statement from the African Caucus that issues associated with land affect all of us. These include forced displacement, deportation and occupation by armed forces. Unfortunately, indigenous areas are so often rich in mineral and natural resources, which make these areas a target of various armed forces. We are not alone in this. This is currently the situation in the Eastern Congo, where in the Kivu region indigenous peoples are being subjected to extreme violence and human rights abuse. The same is happening to our brothers and sisters like the Ogoni in Nigeria and the Tuareg in Niger and Mali.

On the African continent, indigenous peoples have inherited colonial systems of land tenure, and individual property rights, which have allowed dominant groups to expropriate ancestral lands of indigenous peoples over centuries. Individual property rights are inconsistent with indigenous traditional systems of collective occupancy. This is as a result of indigenous peoples not having the necessary legal tools or resources to assert their ancestral rights. Not only does this leads to abuses of indigenous communities, but has left a negative impact for the environment.

The African Caucus presents the following recommendations.

1 - We call upon institutions such as the UN Agencies, African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Union, universities and civil society as a whole to review the system of colonial land tenureship and its effect on indigenous peoples.

2 – We recommend a study that can arrive at a platform that can establish a framework – within a specific timeframe - to revise these detrimental systems and provide alternative systems with restitution and redress.

Thank You Madame Chair