

**GENERAL STATEMENTS ON GENDER ISSUES AND HIV-AIDS TO THE WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS.**

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Thank you Chairperson.

Distinguished participants of the working group, fellow representatives of indigenous peoples,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

*Entasupaa pookin.* This is in my indigenous Maasai language means greetings to you all!

Chairperson, I feel privileged to address this session and share the following general statements:

**GENDER ISSUES**

Gender disparities are equally apparent in the community. Discriminatory socio-cultural practices, low levels of literacy and education among women have led to low participation and representation of women in decision-making and economic activities.

Although a number of interventions to address gender issues have been initiated by many organizations, more still needs to be done. The strategies to address the above issues need to focus on programmes that increase women's access to secure livelihoods and resources, removing cultural and legal impediments to participation in decision-making, and raise social awareness on gender issues. Equal participation and representation of women and men at all levels and enhancement of gender equality and status of women should be ensured.

**AIDS ISSUES**

Chairperson, the question of AIDS orphans, as is elsewhere, also looms large in the indigenous community. The indigenous population need to address itself to this question in a manner that the communities will understand and benefit. I however, feel that they are limited resources to adequately address this big issue as an indigenous population and appeal for support from well-wishers and other stakeholders such as the UN to enable indigenous population make relevant interventions to address the pathetic plight of the AIDS orphans.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Given that women are a disadvantaged sex, strategies to address their plight need to focus on programmes that increase their access to secure livelihoods and resources, removing cultural and legal impediments to participation in decision-making.
2. The UN should develop strategies to address the pathetic plight of HIV/AIDS orphans in the indigenous population.

Long live fellow indigenous people

Thank you and may GOD bless you all.