statement of Mr. R. J. Lakra, WORLD ADIVASI COUNCIL (WAC) AT THE
UN-WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS
Geneva, 31. July-4. Aug. 2006 24th session

Agenda Item No. 4(a): Review of developments - General debate.

Respected Mr. Chairman, Distinguished members of the UN-Working Group and Fellow Indigenous Participants from around the world.

This statement contains some remarks about the present situation of the indigenous people and describes in brief some reasons for their grave situation and finally includes some suggestions how their situation can be improved.
Obliviously the worldwide awareness regarding the deteriorating situation of the indigenous peoples has increased during the last years because of the joint efforts of the UN-Working Group, Permanent Forum and the organisations of indigenous peoples. However, the situation of indigenous peoples in many most of the countries of the third world and particularly in South-Asia and Africa has continued to deteriorate in all spheres of life in spite of considerable efforts made by the UN and other organisations for their protection and development. Economic progress being made in China, India and in South-East Asia has been often highlighted since months. In reality, the situations of the indigenous peoples in both of the continents are somewhat similar that they are being marginalized and even struggling for their very survival.

Therefore;
1. It can be concluded that it is not sufficient to give aid/assistance for or in the name of indigenous peoples. It has to be monitored thoroughly in international standard from the very beginning including the genuineness of the organisations or persons involved, because most of the aid has not reached them. Worldwide international gangsters are operating taking great risk of punishment even for relatively small amount of monetary gain in drug dealing, black money laundering and smuggling etc. Only in case of misuse of development aid - multilateral, bilateral or from funding agencies or foundations, no punishment or court trial is assured. No wonder that lion's share of the aid/assistance has been misused - mostly from organisations of dominant society.
2. Lessons have to be learned from the failure of the past. For this purpose thorough investigations and research programs are required at international level regarding the development aid policies and implementations systems in order to make the necessary corrections and to ensure better results. World bank or similar organisation can take a leading part in organising an international conference in this regard with participation of all concerned groups.
3. World-wide family planning and protection of forests must get top priority in all development considerations. (There is no hope of survival for a large number of indigenous peoples without these measures.) In many countries the very habitat/livelihood is being taken away from the indigenous peoples in the name of national development, national security or just giving fake reasons and they are being replaced by the dominant society because of uncontrolled population explosion. The struggle for resources has already started.
4. A program for worldwide promotion and education for peace, tolerance and understanding as well as acceptance as equal human beings (for the minorities like as) should be worked out and implemented. It should include balanced school text books as well as a moral code for information systems like television, news papers and internet. Further it should also promote permanent Forums for dialogue between different religions and cultures.
5. Depriving indigenous peoples and similar minorities of their very livelihood without adequate and real compensation as well as protection should be considered as a crime against humanity so that it can be brought to justice in international court.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and my brothers and sisters for your kind attentions and I hope and request for your cooperation that the suggestions find sympathetic considerations in the respective bodies/institutions.