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Agenda Item 4: Human Rights

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Report on the third session May 17 2004.

Statement of following organisation The Saartjie Baartman Indigenous Medicine Institute.

My name is Thembile Smuts. I am from the Chainouqua KhoeKhoe tribe in the land called the Overberg in the Western Cape, South Africa. I am representing The Saartjie Baartman Indigenous Medicine Institute - a Khoi-San awareness ngo. It is indeed an honour to be here in Indigenous American territory today at the UN's 3rd Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. It is a great privilege to be in the presence of the international indigenous communities represented at this conference. As we say in Nama, one of the two remaining Khoi-San dialects spoken in South Africa, "!Gai-Tses Hoatsana", "greetings everyone."

As someone living under 24hr surveillance for the last two years since the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg - the issue of basic human rights is integral to me as a Khoi-San person. Back home I cannot go to the shop without a security van or police van following me. My most basic interpersonal relationships are impeded upon. My family and friends are threatened. As an indigenous musician my ideas are passed on to other musicians who are supported by multi-national companies. My right to creation and my culture is been violated in a most fundamental way through surveillance technology which only governments and security forces have access to. This surveillance equipment is being used to appropriate my indigenous intellectual property by the South African government, it's agencies and supporters. It is as if I am living in a cage like my great ancestral Mother Mama Saartjie Baartman in London and Paris almost 200 years ago during the emergence of the scientific racism movement. It is in essence this racism which I am enduring through surveillance technology.

I RESECTFULLY PROPOSE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATION(S):

We recommend that the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues urge the nation states recognised under the UN and it's agencies to persuade the South African government to respect the rights for the Khoi-San Indigenous Peoples to cultural, spiritual and physical well being, to organise and assemble and to most importantly, freely express ourselves.

We recommend that the UN and it's agencies persuade the South African government to recognise the Khoi-San peoples, as the First Indigenous Peoples of South Africa and recognise our human rights in accordance with the constitution of South Africa.

We recommend that the UN and it's agencies persuade the South African government to acknowledge our two existing Khoi-San languages, Nama and !Nu as official languages which would support and facilitate the maintaining and strengthening of our culture for the future generations of our people

We recommend that the UN and it's agencies persuade the South African government to review it's relationship with the extractive industries headed by Anglo American, Debeers and BHP Billiton most notably in the form of it's black economic empowerment policy which is responsible for the contiuing undermining of our basic human rights as Khoi-San peoples and in violation of the UN Declaration on Human Rights.

South Africa

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