

Statement of Yozo Yokota
on

Working Paper by Mrs. Françoise Hampson on
 "The Human Rights Situation of Indigenous
 Peoples in States and Territories Threatened
 with Extinction for Environmental Reasons"

23 July 2004

1. I found Ms. Hampson's working paper on "The Human Rights Situation of Indigenous Peoples in States and Territories Threatened with Extinction for Environmental Reasons" very stimulating and thought-provoking and I am grateful to Mrs. Hampson for submitting this interesting paper.

2. Most human rights issues that we address are related to past and present abuses of human rights. However, this particular issue requires a lot of theoretical thinking. Although we are mostly talking about hypothesis in dealing with disappearing States and territories for environmental reasons, hypothesis is not fairy or unreal but is something almost certainly happen, although that will we do not know exactly when.

3. I think that Mrs. Hampson's analysis is well-thought out and correct. I only have two comments to make.

4. One comment is that we have to determine at some time in the future when we know better about the subject whether the issue is an "indigenous issue" which this Working Group has to address or "a broader human rights issue of disappearing States and territories for environmental reasons." I do not have the answer yet myself but we must decide at some point in future on this.

5. My second comment is that, in the context of indigenous peoples, ~~all being~~ the environmental and climatic changes would have tremendous impact on the well-being and survival of indigenous peoples, because their life is so deeply connected to lands, nature and biosystem which are daily threatened by environmental changes. It is my view that the issue could be in the future expanded to "something like: "The Implications ~~of~~ to the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples of Environmental and/or Climatic Changes."

6. In conclusion, I would like to support strongly the proposals made by Mrs. Thompson

- (a) To hold a seminar to identify practical and legal issues
and
- (b) ~~To~~ a further report be submitted to the next session of the Working Group and the Sub-Commission for their consideration.