

**The Sixth Session of the United Nation Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Item 8: Ongoing activities and themes: Data collection and the disaggregation of data on indigenous peoples (2004)

Situation of data collection on socio-economical situation of Ainu

Thank you chairperson,

This is a joint statement from the Ainu Resource Centre and the Shimin Gaikou Center from Japan. Thank you for this opportunity to address the agenda item on data collection. I would like to report the current situation of data collection on Ainu.

At the national level, the Japanese government does not collect data on Ainu, which is a policy grounded in the Japanese government's refusal to recognize indigenous rights. There are no indicators which refer to ethnicity or indigenousness in the national census. The living conditions of Ainu are unclear.

Situation in Hokkaido

At the regional level, the Hokkaido government has conducted the survey with support from the Ainu Association of Hokkaido. This survey "Hokkaido Utari(Ainu) survey on living conditions" has been conducted five times since 1972¹. This is part of the social and economical welfare measures known as the "Hokkaido Utari(Ainu) Welfare Measures". The latest survey was conducted in 2006 and published this April.

These surveys have inherent problems regarding indicators and methodology. The results show an improvement concerning the discrimination situation, however the actual social and economical situations are getting worse. The indicators that are used concerning the situation of discrimination only target an individual level of discrimination. The survey lacks the perspective of structural discrimination and indirect discrimination. In addition, it is obvious that the budget for the survey is insufficient, which has lead to a limited survey period. Participation and consultation of Ainu in the survey are also insufficient. Given these issues, although the Hokkaido government has conducted surveys, these do not target all Ainu in Hokkaido and the results do not reflect the real situation of Ainu in Hokkaido.

Situation in Kanto region

Along with the growth of the Japanese economy since 1960, the majority of Ainu have left their traditional land and moved to the Kanto region, which surrounds the Tokyo metropolitan area, in order to find work, escape discrimination or other reasons. However, according to the Ainu Association of Hokkaido regulations, the administration of its "Hokkaido Utari (Ainu) Welfare Measure" is limited only to those Ainu living in Hokkaido. Those Ainu who do not live in Hokkaido can not be included in the "Hokkaido Utari (Ainu) survey on living conditions," and can not benefit from its measures.

¹ 1972, 1979, 1993, 1999 and 2006

However, the Tokyo government conducted a survey on the living conditions of Ainu in Tokyo in 1974 and again in 1989 by request from Ainu. These two surveys show that Ainu in Tokyo in the 70s and early 90s faced financial difficulties as a result of a limited academic background and limited job opportunities in blue collar jobs. However, it also showed the desire of these Ainu to transmit and learn Ainu traditional culture and a request to have their own place to learn, such as a community centre.

Since the 1990s, we have requested the Tokyo government to conduct surveys on living conditions in order to understand the social and economic situation, not only in Tokyo but the whole Kanto area. The second survey in 1989 estimated that there were 2700 Ainu living in Kanto. But it is hard to say that this reflects the current situation. And past surveys were conducted only in Tokyo, not the whole of the Kanto region. So we are unsure of the real situation of Ainu in the Kanto region.

It is clear that social support is needed in order to solve problems, but it is necessary to understand the actual situation. There is a pressing need to conduct a survey with the premise of this kind of social support.

In addition, UN treaty bodies made recommendations to the Japanese government regarding data collection. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) recommended that the next state party report contain socio-economic data disaggregated by gender, nationality and ethnicity in its concluding observations². The concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) with regards to Japan recommended in 2004 that the state make an effort to collect data about indigenous children. The Committee also recommended that the state party strengthen existing mechanisms for data collection, in order to ensure that data is collected on all areas under the Convention and that it is disaggregated by age for all persons under 18 years, gender and ethnic and indigenous minorities³. All of these concluding observations are the most recent. The government must show this data. Up until now, no related data collection has occurred.

Finally, we would like to propose the following recommendations to the Permanent Forum. We support the recommendations in the fifth Permanent Forum report (E/C.19/2006/11), paragraph 102 and 103.

1. To call upon the Japanese government to conduct a national survey on socio-economical status of Ainu on the basis of the recognition of Ainu as indigenous peoples. This survey should aim for the implementation of an applicable national measure to Ainu based on the result. This survey must be conducted with full and effective participation and consultation with the Ainu people.

2. To appeal to UN agencies to continue their effort to establish indicators of indigenous peoples, especially in terms of methodology in data collection.

Thank you for your attention.

² CERD concluding observation CERD/C/304/Add.114 para22

³ CRC concluding observation CRC/C/15/Add.231 para16&17