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Speaker: Mr. Francis Hembrom

Joint statement by the Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ICITP) & All India Santal Welfare and Cultural Society (AISWACS).

I thank the Chair for giving me the opportunity to speak on the issues pertaining to my community. It is a great privilege and honor for me to intervene in this 24th session of the WGIP.

Respected Chairperson, distinguished members of the Working Group, Govt. Representatives, Representatives of UN Agencies and my fellow Indigenous Delegates from around the World - I bring greetings to you from the Adivasis, the Indigenous Peoples of India-JOHAR!!!! I speak on behalf of "Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples", India

"Ragi kana ko Bonga Buru", meaning "The Gods are angry" - This is the title of the 55 minutes film by a renowned documentary filmmaker, Shriprakash on Jadugoda Uranium mines in a tribal populated area in Jharkhand.

"Jadugoda" a small hamlet now developed to a town is a home for around 41 thousand people of which 90% of them belonging to Indigenous communities like the Santals (85%), Mundas and the Hos.

Uranium Corporation of India Limited, a government undertaking is India's only underground uranium mine in Jadugoda, approximately 130 KM from the state capital of Jharkhand, where all the state functionary sit and run the state including the "Ministry of Health, Medical Education and Family Welfare" and the "Chief Minister", himself

The UNSAFE activities of mining, milling and tailing-dam by the Uranium Corporation of India Limited since last 35 years, have deposited radioactive waste into the rice fields owned by the Tribal people of the Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. The Adivasis have unknowingly utilized the water and land in these areas which has resulted in excessive radiation and has led to genetic mutations and slow deaths. Medical reports reveal that the impact of radiation on the health of tribal peoples has already been devastating.

The government may deny all the allegations, and even say as it has been doing in the past that the deaths and health conditions of the victims of Jadugoda are a result of their "unhygienic and drinking habits". Such racial stereotyping of Adivasis/Tribals and Dalits communities in India is usual in this high caste ruled society.

There are documental evidences which contradict the govt.'s position while stating that the present situation of the Indigenous Communities in terms of their minimal health condition are not the consequences of Uranium mining in the region. Some pictures depicting the real life situation (effect of radiation) are also provided for your information.

Mr. Mark Whitaker from British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), in his report on ""Living next to uranium mine" went on to saying "**And the search for prosperity and progress has its victims too.** UCIL claims to have brought job, prosperity, money, good housing, standard of living... but question is at what price ?!!