

General Statement
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Istma aitma: azul flawn(t)

Mr. Chairperson,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the Permanent Forum, the state representatives, governmental and non governmental organizations,

Dear sisters and brothers, the representatives of Indigenous peoples,

- 1) I would like to take the floor on behalf of the IPACC (Indigenous Peoples African Coordinating Committee,) the World Amazigh Congress, which contains more than one hundred Amazigh associations (from northwest Africa, Canary Islands and Amazigh organizations in Europe, United States and Canada) and also on behalf of Tamaynut (Tamaynut is one of a big network of Amazigh organizations in Morocco representing Amazigh people), to congratulate the United Nations and international Indigenous peoples' movement on the establishment of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues which is for us the first step towards reforming the United Nations' system and towards opening it up to an effective participation of Indigenous peoples of the world. I would like to warmly congratulate the experts elected or appointed by the ECOSOC president in accomplishing this historic mission and in assuming the responsibility of progress by means of this Forum which we hope to be the ongoing basis of an international process to recognize all human rights for Indigenous peoples. Their dignity, equality, their rights to their cultural and linguistic identities, their civilization, their land rights, their material and spiritual wealth, as well as their right to self-determination are well within the scope of national unity and a democratic Federal system with democratic constitutions recognizing the Indigenous peoples' languages as official languages.
- 2) We consider that standards of assimilation adopted by the nation-states on both levels, national and international, which have as their objective the destruction of the cultural and linguistic identities and the civilization of

Indigenous peoples, have accomplished the “consecration” of racism and racial discrimination against these peoples nationally and internationally, and imposed a big prejudice upon humankind and its diversity which is the richness of our world. The policies based on assimilation standards have also imposed dictatorial systems in many regions of the world which are sustained by the other states.

- 3) We know today that all states of the world have ratified the Convention on Biodiversity to protect all plants, animals and all kinds of life, and that this requires a very high degree of awareness and recognition of the obligation on the part of nations to protect biodiversity. But we would like to draw attention to the double standards against the rights of Indigenous peoples. The majority of states do not recognize their rights. On most occasions, the term Indigenous peoples is bracketed in their political statements. We are concerned because the majority of states which helped in the adoption of the ILO Convention 169 in 1989 have not yet ratified it.
- 4) We consider that the establishment of the Permanent Forum under the review of the politics of assimilation standards did not let this instance be realised as expected by the Indigenous peoples of the world. This idea is clearly made concrete in its name- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (without mention of Indigenous Peoples).
You know that many families of Indigenous peoples are denied the right to register the names of their children in their own languages (as happens with the Amazigh peoples in North Africa.)
- 5) The status of the advisory body of the Permanent Forum does not allow this process to reform the UN system but I would like to say that it is a very important step towards influencing the resolution of the UN system and in making progress towards the elimination of all kinds of discrimination against Indigenous peoples of the world.

Hassan Idbalkassm
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