

**Statement by the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**  
**United Nations Office, Geneva**  
**1<sup>st</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2008**

**Item 3-Implementation of the Human Rights Council Resolution 6/36 entitled “Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” including Consideration of Thematic Expertise**

Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address this august assembly. I am Legborsi Saro Pyagbara from the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP).

I want to at the outset join others to congratulate you on your election as the chairperson-rapporteur of this first session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP). I also extend my congratulations to other members of the Expert Mechanism who are appointed with you to carry out the difficult tasks of making this newest body within the Human Rights Council work. Not left out are my indigenous brothers and sisters who worked tirelessly to ensure that indigenous issues remain in the orbit of discourses in the United Nations with the establishment of this mechanism.

Mr. Chair, several difficulties face us as indigenous peoples. Whilst acknowledging that the Mechanism has its own challenges, my organization believes that it is an important step forward in the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples as it promises to take us to the next level.

In their separate speeches this morning, the President of the Human Rights Council and the Deputy High Commissioner of Human Rights stressed on the issue of implementation. It is to this end, Mr. Chair that we feel that as part of its thematic focus, the Expert Mechanism would seek to undertake a study on some of the efforts that United Nations agencies are putting into mainstreaming the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples in their programme of work especially in the light of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and highlight implementation gaps where necessary.

Coming from Africa where the issues of the recognition of Indigenous peoples remain a constant and dominant one, it will interest us if the Expert Mechanism could do more in terms of exploring into the challenges that act as barriers to the recognition of Indigenous peoples in Africa. The embarrassing bare presence of African governments in this session of the Expert Mechanism is a reflection of their commitment to indigenous issues

It is in this respect that we encourage the Expert Mechanism to also adopt as part of its working methods strong collaboration with regional human rights protection mechanism such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) with its Working Group on indigenous peoples and local communities. Their role in the promotion and protection of human rights cannot be overemphasized.

Mr. Chair, whilst giving our support to the proposal that global and cross-cutting issues should be the focus of thematic studies, we also wish to add that this should not diminish the fact that there is the need in some cases to focus on regional specificities to reflect regional concerns and experiences.

In a related development, Mr. Chair, recognizing the role that land and resources play in our daily lives as indigenous peoples especially in this era corporate globalization and capitalist driven mitigation measures adopted by states in respect of their responses to the climate change crisis, the issue of Free, prior and informed consent is one that we would encourage the EMRIP to seriously take into account by promoting and strengthening its discussion and application perhaps by doing a review of existing guidelines on free, prior and informed consent with the intend of taking the work further.

Lastly, Mr. Chair, to avoid the fate that befell several thematic studies that have been done before now, we strongly recommend that EMRIP develop a clear, concise and practical follow-up framework to the studies so that they would not go the way of others.

Thank you.

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