

Intervention of S.E. Ambassador Giampaolo Rizzo Alvarado

Adjunct Permanent Representative

Human Rights Council/Forum on Minority Issues

Wednesday 15, December 2010

Madame President,

Among the guiding principles of the Plan for the Nation implemented by President Porfirio Lobo Sosa in the beginning of his constitutional mandate, the recognition that Honduras is a multicultural and plurilingual country was established, in recognition of the 11% of Hondurans that belong to the nine indigenous peoples and Afro-Hondurans spread throughout the national territory. Consequently, its programs and policies not only respect this condition but also propel its development.

In this sense, in addition to decreeing the month of April as the “African heritage in Honduras month,” actions have already been implemented, such as the Program for the Integral Development of the Indigenous Peoples, which has as an objective to improve their quality of life and contribute to their integral and sustainable development. The Special Plan for Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Communities seeks to provide the correct application of the Health, Education, and Nutrition Programs. The National Program of Education for Ethnic Groups responds to their specific necessities with special attention to language and culture; adapting texts into seven indigenous languages and training educators with an orientation towards Intercultural Bilingual Education, with Spanish as a second language.

Madame President,

Without a doubt, much remains to be done: reduce the poverty indices and illiteracy of these communities; implement more actions in matters of human rights, as well as in land tenancy, and the application of additional policies to correct the inequalities that affect these peoples.

The creation of the Ministry of Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples, whose secretary was sworn in November 30 of this year, marks a historical landmark and clearly reflects the will and compromise of President Lobo Sosa to protect and promote human rights in Honduras, including and with particular importance towards minorities.

During the XV period of sessions of the Human Rights Council, the Delegation of Honduras manifested its desire to confront the challenge of developing leadership capacity to guarantee in the long term the participation of minorities in taking their own decisions, within an institutional framework where they are truly represented. This is why we take with full satisfaction the different interventions made in this forum,

and especially the one from the President of ODECO, who with his dedication and professional work complements the labor of our government in this thematic issue. It is a clear example of positive synergy for the benefit of the population with an African heritage in Honduras.

Finally, I would like to invite all in the name of the Government of Honduras to the Global Summit of Afro-descendants in the city of La Ceiba, in August 2011.

Thank you very much.