

15th December, 2010

3rd Forum on Minority Issues,

Thank you Madam Chair

I am speaking on behalf of the Indigenous community living in North-East States of India, particularly for the Kuki minority.

The India geopolitics has separated the Kuki people throughout India, Burma. Their distinctiveness has been ignored, assimilated to a dominant majority identity in both country. This to a large extent has created a sense of alienation and had generated a sub-nationalist movement in the international borders of India

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These regions have been often described as India's biggest Zoo by the mainland Indian. The basic necessities such as safe drinking water, sanitation, housing, healthcare and electricity are still a far cry.

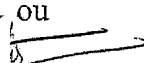
Since the initiation of India's Look East policy in 1991, North-East regions occupied the most important place in the eyes of the Indian Government and business community from mainland India. In the name of development, there has been gradual loss of control over natural resources including land. Our resources are regularly deregulated by the Government laws and transferred for private use to outsiders, Government agencies and corporate bodies without our consent. Our voices are brutally suppressed and there has been arbitrary imposition of projects under the protection of paramilitary forces.

The opening of Moreh Trading point (Inhabited by indigenous minority) in Manipur by the Indian and Myanmar government has not benefited the Indigenous minority and instead it resulted in exploitation and land grabbing and displacement.

There is an immediate requirement of the attention of the Minority Forum and Human Rights Commission to advice the Indian Government to amend a special provision for the protection of land and identities of indigenous community.

It is also pertinent to mention that, higher education has become more expensive and unaffordable for the indigenous communities; there is gradual increase of schools and college drop-outs. Without higher education, we lack economic opportunities and expertise. Therefore it is very essential to establish a low cost higher education institute for Medical, Engineering and Business Management especially for the minorities.

Lastly, there are also many incidents of indirect discrimination on indigenous people while seeking loan/credit from the Banks. Therefore, I seek the attention of Minority forum and Human Rights Commission to request the Government of India to amend special provisions for the indigenous community to access credit in Banks without collateral securities.

Thank You  H. Benjamin Mate

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