

3<sup>rd</sup> session on the Forum for Minority Issues  
Ms. Clemencia Carabali on Item III and IV

Good morning everybody! On behalf of the Afro-Colombian women I would like to thank the organisers of this important event and most particularly the Independent Expert, Dr Gay McDougall for having made this Forum possible. I would like to thank all her team as well. Women are half of the world, were the past, are the present and we are still building for everybody. My name is Clemencia Carabali, I am from Colombia, and I am part of the Municipal Association of Women. Afro-Colombians according to 2005 census represent 10.5% of the population and we have contributed to the building of the economic political cultural life of the country right from the beginning, right from when we worked as slaves in [mining] and agriculture on the big farms and building roads and other things right through to the present we continue to contribute in all areas of human life.

We have had to fight hard, we Afro-Colombians. Because Colombia is one of the countries in the world that now has wide recognition of the rights of people of African descent. However there is a lack of effective political will in successive governments. And there is a development model based on the extraction and exploitation of natural resources, the state is weak in assuming its obligations on human rights and protecting ethnic, cultural and environmental rights. And added to the internal armed conflict together with other factors mean that rights are not complied with or guaranteed in practice. Afro-Colombians are marginalised by the state and not taken into account in public policies. The treatment of this segment of the population is marked by discrimination, racism and seizing of goods, material and immaterial. There are no criteria in public policy in Colombia for inclusion and non-discrimination. Land rights have been affected by mass displacements confinement, threats in the presence of mega-economic projects, monocultures, port, mining and tourist ventures among others. According to the national register of displaced persons over the last 10 years there were some 142 000 Afro-Colombians in 2005 one some 4 million Afro-descendants in Colombia were recognised as Afro-Colombians who were displaced that is 10 per cent of the total of the displaced population in Colombia in the second national survey it was pointed out that 16.6 per cent of the population who were displaced were Afro-Colombians. This shows that there is a greater impact of displacement among the Afro-Colombian population.

This is mainly due to the fact that measures are not implemented to guarantee protection of afro-descendent communities. This leads to loss of land, where not only property is seized but also the right to use land and exploit resources and national and traditional heritage confinement of free movement, disappearance of traditional authorities and economic control of the territory by external legal or illegal factors. We live in a strategic area with great power diversity and a lot of national resources. Displacement in Colombia is not just a result of the war but because of development projects, which enable large-scale projects and mono-culture to thrive. Gold, coal and etc, national transnational roads hydroelectric dams, extensive sugarcane plantations for fuel and palm oil deter, all of these are initiatives that have the support of the state. And this situation arises because there is no respect for FPIC and as ILO Convention 169 and Colombian Constitution establish it, however this is not implemented by the government. We have great difficulties

in fulfilling our rights and freedoms. We don't even get the minimum for economic social and cultural rights from the Colombian government.

Moreover, Colombian women continue suffer triple discrimination first because they are poor, second because they are black, and third because they are women despite the fact that there are programs for women they don't take a differentiated approach to make visible Afro-women and which are directed at providing solutions to their social and economic problems so our recommendation would be that the government and national private and international private investors must respect the right to FPIC and the rights of Afro-Colombians to chose their own priorities for development in so far as anything affects their life spiritual well-being, their land and we would like as much as possible to manage our own economic social and cultural development. Furthermore the right of these people to take part in the formulation and implementation evaluation of development plans and programs at national and regional levels, which might have a direct impact on us. So this is a complex picture, and as I said in the outset that I am part of the Municipal Association of Women.

I just like to take the last two minutes I have to share with you a practice that we engage in despite the difficulties we face in our country, our association is developing a number of initiatives all in defence of our rights and I would particularly like to emphasize a process that has been underway in the framework of economic development initiatives to contribute to food security income and environmental protection with the support of the international organisations for migration after our women were displaced following a massacre we were then returned and we organised ourselves in order to recover our land our crops and our way of life and that is how we together with the support of the National Organisation for Migrations, we planned our project where and with whom and when we were going to implement it and today we have been able to implement a number of productive activities which enable us to contribute us to food security, environmental recovery, enable us to generate a rotation fund as we Afro-Colombian Women have a lot of limitations on access to banks because we don't have any property as collateral for credit. So we are building up our small rotating fund to provide credit to women for seeds and other inputs for their crops, where all processes to strengthen organisations further our culture and our ethnic culture particularly among the Afro-Colombian women.

One last recommendations we have engaged in this very minor experience but we think that it could be an example of a practice that can contribute not just to achieving the peace that we all so much desire but to ensure respect to life and ethnic and cultural diversity which is present in all countries in the world. I would therefore urge international aid agencies to support this sort of initiative in different parts of our country because we believe this is one possible way. Thank you.