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IK statement on their right to education at the UN Minority Forum 2011

Dear Madam Chairperson, Thank you for giving me the floor.

I'm Pheona Namuyaba from Uganda representing Community Development Resource Network (CDRN). I hereby make a statement on behalf of the IK community on their right to education.

The IK are peaceful cultivators ^{and} neighbor [redacted] cattle keepers (Uganda's Dodoth and Jie and Kenya's Turkana). The IK are caught up between cattle raids and their meagre food is stolen, property destroyed, and sometimes killed. They stay in a hard to reach area and have limited access to social services.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and many other instruments recognize the right to education. I am pleased that the Ugandan Constitution recognizes the IK as one of the ethnic minority groups in the country.

The Government of Uganda has undertaken measures to ensure the right to education through implementing the Universal Primary and Secondary Education, affirmative action of 1.5 extra points at university for girls, the education quota system, introduction of Functional Adult Literacy classes, and Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja to mention but a few.

Universal Primary and Secondary Education caters only for school fees while other items are left to the parents and guardians. Poverty has greatly contributed to low illiteracy levels among IK minority women and girls since they cannot afford the other school requirements. In addition to poverty, insecurity caused by warriors, long distances between communities and schools, early marriages and the IK cultural practice where women fend for the family are some of the reasons hindering girls from attending school.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my sincere submission that special education programs need to be designed for minority groups like the IK in order to ensure balance and fair representation of minority groups. I agree with the secretariat on recommendations 48 and 49 and I propose that

- Both Government and NGOs of Uganda should support at least 30% of minority girls with all the necessities like food, uniform and sanitary materials to stay and study in school throughout primary and secondary. By doing these we would have made the girls from minority groups competitive for University entry scheme both government and quota system.
- The Government of Uganda should develop a program and a plan to train and empower IK minority women on practical vocational skills in sectors of agriculture and health which they can employ to support and improve their communities.

Madam chair, as I conclude, allow me to thank Minority Right Group International for enabling me to participate in this forum.

29th and 30th Nov 2011 Contact email: [redacted]@gmail.com; Tel: [redacted]