

7th Session of the Human Rights Council

Forum on Minority Issues "Preventing and addressing violence and atrocity crimes targeted against minorities".

Statement for the 7th session of the Forum on Minority Issues.

25-26 November 2014

Agenda No. 4: Improving prevention of violence and atrocity crimes

Mr. Chairperson

Distinguished representatives of state members, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Shaun Campbell Bush, I am a Nicaraguan citizen. I'm here on behalf of the Africandescendent minority of Nicaragua. I speak on behalf of several organizations: NBPA, Creole Communal Government and KONIC.

It is a great honor to be here before you. This moment would have not been possible without the devoted commitment of the office of OHCHR in guaranteeing effective participation of minorities through its Minority Fellowship Program; we are forever indebted to you.

Nicaragua has gone through the two UPR cycle process and there is no doubt, there has been significant advances in narrowing the gaps on minority rights. Nevertheless, the people of the Caribbean Coast, particularly people belonging to communities of African Descent are still struggling to attain the full enjoyment of their human rights.

There are four major challenges faced today by the Afro-descendants of Nicaragua:

1. There are 23 indigenous and Africandescendent territories in the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, that have been going through a process of demarcation and titling according to the respective law, however the sanitation stage is not yet considered by the government, causing conflict with third parties on communal land.
2. There is an ongoing tension between Africandescendent and the Regional Government due to the appropriation of a cultural infrastructure, such as the case of the Cultural Creole Center in the city of Bilwi, Puerto Cabezas.
3. There is lack of effective political representation of Africandescendent at the regional, municipal and national level; the limited quota has been used by person's that mostly belong to political structures that are not effectively representing the Afrodescendant community.
4. There is a continuous process of invisibilization of the Africandescents; which is manifested by insufficient budgetary allocations to the autonomous region and the lack of effective and inclusive public policies, programs and affirmative action aiming to target the improvement of the minority life conditions.

With the conviction that building sustainable peace, equality and non-discrimination, depends on the willingness of the State and its people:

1. We recommend all State members to embrace the General Assembly resolution proclaiming the International Decade for People of African Descent by creating laws ensuring comprehensive and affirmative actions aimed at fostering the living conditions of the Africandescent by the year 2015.
2. We endorse and urge States members to adopt recommendation number 13, 17 and 25, where minority people can enjoy their rights of fair representation in all decision making-bodies, ensuring the compliance with recommendations of the CEDAW whereby Afrodescendant women can occupy jobs where their voice and opinion are fundamental in decision-making and are not only for numerical purposes.
3. We call upon member States to adopt recommendation number 19 by developing effective public policies and mechanism of consultation and participation process for minority people, incorporating the role of civil society to guarantee accuracy and consistency on the result of the processes.
4. We urge the Forum to include a new recommendation: Consultation and consensus with minority people should take place before pursuing any action that may result in negative impact on minority; such as the cases of land, territory and cultural patrimony, in accordance with the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, CDESCR, Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minority.

Thank you very much for your attention.