



Cape times

Press Corps

Reporters: Charlie Smith and Gaia Justwan

Committee: United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Topic 2: Guiding Principles for the Implementation of Indigenous Peoples' Rights to Autonomy and Self-Government

The issue of indigenous people's rights is not only a problem in some countries, it is a global issue. Indigenous people around the world face marginalization, limited political representation, social disadvantages, and discrimination. But this needs to change.

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has been put in place for groups of indigenous peoples to discuss issues including land grabbing, lack of autonomy and self-government, and the lack of clear borders. The delegates for the Mbororo people of the Republic of Chad said, "Chad does not officially recognize them at all." Similarly, the Batwa people of Burundi are also "suppressed by the government," says their delegation. When the delegation representing the San people located in Namibia was asked, they explained how Namibia's government was generally neutral, with nothing against the indigenous peoples.

None of the four delegations interviewed stated that their countries had a positive outlook on indigenous people's rights, especially their rights to land. The delegates for the Mbororo people stated that "it has become like a land-grabbing thing where the trade routes of the Mbororo get

cut off, so they don't have access to the water sources they once had." None of the four delegations stated their plan for the indigenous peoples they represented. None of the four delegations stated that there was aggression against the indigenous, just silent discrimination and prejudice, with a lack of autonomy and self-governing.

The key to all of this is that many countries have neglected their indigenous population. Many countries do not prioritize the indigenous right to land, autonomy, and self-government. This should change, though, and through the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, it can. Throughout the conference, delegates from these different indigenous groups meet and discuss, and plan.

With this information and this forum, you can make a change. You can inform others and be part of the change. These countries may not have made a lot of progress, but slowly but surely, they are stepping in the right direction.