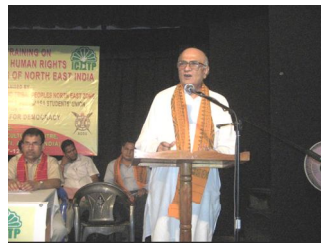


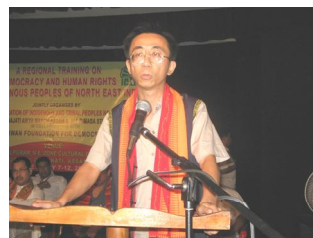
**PRESS RELEASE
ON
“TRAINING ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF
NORTH EAST INDIA”.
12/07/2009**



A five-day intensive regional training workshop on “ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF NORTH EAST INDIA” was held from July 7-12 at Shilpgram, Guwahati, Assam organized jointly by Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples North East Zone (ICITP-NEZ), Sanjukta Janajati Aikya Manch-Assam (SJAMA) and All Dimasas Students’ Union (ADSU). The training was sponsored by Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD), Taiwan and local supporters.

The training workshop was well attended by 165 participants representing over 45 different Indigenous Peoples’ organizations from the North Eastern India. Dr. Ram Dayal Munda, Former Vice Sensual of Ranchi University, Ranchi, Jharkhand; Dr. T.T. Haokip, Professor of Political Science, North East Hill University (NEHU), Shillong, Meghalaya; Mr. Jebra Ram Muchahary, President of Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal People North East Zone (ICITP-NEZ), Guwahti, Assam; Padmshri Natwar Thakkar, Founder General Secretary of Nagaland Gandhi Ashram, Guwahati, Assam; Mrs. Aini Taloh, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society and Rev. Awala Longkumer, Dimapur, Nagaland played vital role to facilitate the training programme as facilitators. We had an International representative from Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, Mr. Jason Pan who had not only come to strengthen the India-Taiwan Indigenous People solidarity and cooperation but also played major role as an expert in imparting the International concept, legal instruments, values, principles and practices of Democracy and Human Rights, particularly with special reference on Taiwan experience on Democratization, Indigenous people movement world white and Human Rights situation of Indigenous People in Asia.

The training was graced by many dignitaries, intellectuals and leaders who participated as the chief- guest, guest of honour and co-chairs in different sessions during the training programme.



Main Goal:

The main long-term goal of this training was to help strengthen democratic institutions and civil societies, and to adopt and adhere to democratic values and practices through empowering and creating effective social leaders, politicians, thinkers, scholars, academicians, students, youths and women in the region and to build solidarity and net work of IPs in the region for effective and meaningful advocacy and policy influencing for realization of IPs aspiration through peaceful democratic manner and effective participation in dialogue with the concern party/parties including government for peaceful political solutions to their problems and social justices and human rights. It was also design to help to:

1. Establish peaceful atmosphere among different Indigenous Peoples and cultures;
2. Improve Democracy among IPs in the region;
3. Help strengthening the emotional integration and solidarity between different Indigenous Peoples and cultures for peaceful co-existence.

Other objectives were:

1. To share ideas and to explore mechanisms to bring change in the flawed democratic institutions, the promotion of political pluralism, and human and civil rights;
2. To help exploring mechanism to provide support for Human Rights education, human rights NGO start-ups, to improve respect/ enforcement of human rights, torture victim rehabilitation;
3. To impart knowledge on exploring mechanism for publication and distribution of legal documents, translation into minority dialects and dissemination of the constitution and other laws, legal education, bar and encourage legal aid projects;
4. To impart knowledge on present judicial system & Action, Role of the judicial branch in a democracy, improvement of the judicial system, modern/traditional judicial officials-on the rule of law;
5. To explore and design on capacity building of Legislature to Improve the Legislature's efficiency, and future training for Tribal MLs & MPs and their staff;
6. To strategize to carry out public education and training for Indigenous independent journalists on the role played by the independent media in a democracy, technical assistance, support to journalist association start-ups;
7. To sensitize on public awareness campaign or voting rights and/or the social costs of public corruption. Education, counseling and legal aid for the prevention of violence against women or female genital mutilation;
8. To educate on initiating action oriented programme on empowerment of women, women-led NGO start-ups, increased access of women and ethnic groups to the judicial system and the political processes;
9. To educate fundamentals on monitoring of elections, role of independent electoral commissions, local agents or NGO's responsible for following up the electoral process;
10. To educate on the basic concept on Conflict Resolution, Limited intervention in promoting tolerance and understanding among various groups, which make up the society (ethnic, religious, or political factions);
11. To identify and denounce regimes those deny their citizens the right to choose their

The five- day intensive programme was a grand success which was first in its objective and nature in the North Eastern part on India were leaders from more than 50 organizations belonging to Indigenous and local communities took active participation with much enthusiasm and with great interest. Local contribution for food and transportation was a great example of good cooperation and unity among the Indigenous local peoples of North East India. The cultural expressions by the local communities added extra flavour to the whole proceedings of the event. The following declaration and recommendations was adopted at the end of the training programme, which was publicly resolved and declared in the public meeting Lohitmukh in Sonitpur, Assam on 12 of July 2009 and an apex civil society organization "**United Peoples' Federation of Assam**" was formed to follow up the democratic movement of the people of Assam for the best interest of Assam and its people, particularly for the Indigenous Peoples and local communities of Assam.



2009 GUWAHATI DECLARATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

We, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of North East India represented by over 45 Indigenous Peoples organizations, Tribal Communities, Civil Society Organizations, Indigenous Peoples movements of NER and mainland India from 7th to 12th July, 2009, Guwahati, Assam, India participated in a "Regional Training on Democracy and Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples of North East India". The primary objective of the training program was to educate individuals and indigenous groups on the issue of democracy and indigenous rights; to find resolutions for the ethnic clash and violence between the different communities, and to start a dialogue process and provide recommendations to the government in this regard. It is very vital to recognize, understand and to examine the root causes of the ethnic violence and chaos that has historically resulted from causes such as social exclusion, economic disparity, class and racial discrimination. It is important to comprehend the contemporary situation of the region resulting from large scale illegal immigration and marginalization of various communities.

Herein the following are the recommendations resulting from our consultation and feedback:

1. Repeal the Armed Forces Special Power Act, (AFSPA) of 1958.
2. Dismantle the Unified Command structure and empower the state police to tackle the law and order situation in the region.
3. Amend the Indian Police Act, 1862 for ensuring better rights protection for the peoples of NER.
4. The Government of India must ratify UNCAT (United Nation Convention Against Torture, inhuman and degrading treatment).
5. We appeal to the state and all the non-state actors to ensure Human Rights in Compliance to the United Nations Geneva Convention.
6. Encourage the Participation of Women and Indigenous Peoples representatives as members in the state and national Human Rights Commission, and setup Women's Wing at the local level for filing petitions for any such violations.
7. The Article 21 of the Indian Constitution which guarantees the "Right to Life" should be ensured and implemented in the North East Region.
8. Strict measures must be undertaken to check infiltration of illegal immigrants and the border must be sealed to stop the further infiltration of illegal immigrants.
9. Ensure safety and security of each and every Indigenous and Tribal group.
10. We must preserve Indigenous and Tribal culture and promote cultural research and initiate steps to preserve the indigenous culture by giving grants, assistance and conservation of ancient heritage, sites, historical monuments and structures depicting the ancient civilization of Indigenous communities of the region.
11. Encourage the participation of women in all decision-making processes and ensure Gender Equality.
12. Make Children's Education Mandatory by including local languages or dialects in the School Curriculum in the NE Region.
13. Protect and preserve the Environmental Bio-Diversity of the NE Region.
14. Promote and encourage Indigenous Media funded by the state and establish "Community Radio Service" in the rural areas inhabited by the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.
15. We appeal to the state to fully implement the UNDRIP (United Nation Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples) for the socio-economic empowerment, and the protection and promotion of the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.
16. We appeal to all sectors to initiate the peace process and political dialogue with all the Ceasefire & Pro Talk Groups without further delay and to reach lasting solutions within the framework of the Indian Constitution by granting full regional autonomy to the Indigenous and Tribal communities in the North East Region.

