Dear Sir/Madam,

This is an attempt by the Guyanese Organization of Indigenous Peoples (GOIP) to respond to the UNEMRIP study, by today's deadline.

Over the past two years, Guyana's Civil Defence Commission (CDC) has twice invited the GOIP and at least one other indigenous advocacy group to what they describe as "consultations" on the issue of natural disaster risk reduction, preparedness initiatives etc. Unfortunately, these meetings were always held at one central location near the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) army base in Georgetown, called at short notice, (less than one week) and no transportation funds were provided to help cover travel to/from the various aboriginal communities for such meetings. Neither was there any attempt to decentralize the consultations by going out to the communities. Maybe there were funding issues, but the GOIP cannot honestly say any meaningful cooperation with the indigenous population to constitute plans for disaster risk reduction exists at this point.

The GOIP however wishes to acknowledge that the Guyana regime has set out on a Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) whereby Norwegian funds are supposed to be used to pay for the preservation of the rainforests, and educate the indigenous communities on climate change issues, with the involvement of the GOIP and other groups. But the momentum started on this issue in 2009, has since become somewhat dormant. The GOIP cannot honestly say most indigenous communities are prepared for any natural disaster risk reduction strategy right now.

In closing, one new idea now emerging from the GOIP is that, for now, three of Guyana's aboriginal communities whose population has been shrinking, be identified to accept limited numbers of climate change refugees from the Pacific island state of Tuvalu within the next decade, since we understand that Tuvalu may submerge under the Ocean in less than 100 years' time. One of the many advantages of this concept, still in its embryonic stage, is that it has the potential to drive home to Guyana's indigenous population the reality of climate change issues which should keep them always in a state of readiness for the eventuality that any of a variety of natural disasters can strike at anytime, hence the need for permanent preparedness.

Sorry, we don't have the format requested for this submission.

Sincerely,

Esther Robinson,
Secretary, GOIP.