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**UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

**SPECIAL PROCEDURES OF THE  
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples**

REFERENCE: Letter CHN 24/2011

24 November 2011

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251 and to Human Rights Council resolution 15/14.

In this connection, I would like to thank your Excellency's Government for its letter of 12 July 2011 in response to my communication of 18 February 2011 concerning the construction of the Gibe III hydroelectric project in Ethiopia. I appreciate the information provided, especially the clarifications about the involvement of the Industrial Commercial Bank of China and the China Export-Import Bank in the Gibe III project.

As your Excellency's Government may be aware, I provided some observations with recommendations on this situation following my initial exchange of information with the Government of Ethiopia. The observations can be found in my report to the Human Rights Council on *Communications Sent, Replies Received, and Follow Up* (A/HRC/18/35.Add.1). I consider that the observations I communicated to the Government of Ethiopia are relevant to your Excellency's Government, given the similarities between the responses of the Government of Ethiopia and the Government of the People's Republic of China to my letters sent regarding the Gibe III project.

In my observations, I stated that I cannot help but notice that there "...appears to be a major divergence of opinion regarding the potential environmental and social impacts of the Gibe III project". As I noted to the Government of Ethiopia, "On the one hand, the Government hails the benefits of the project and assures that it is taking measures to address in full any potential adverse impacts. On the other hand, sources of information with whom [I have] been in contact predict catastrophic consequences of the hydroelectric project on the environment and local communities, and indicate that the Government has not put in place adequate mitigation measures to offset these consequences" (para. 8).

I also emphasized to the Government of Ethiopia that "... given the magnitude of the Gibe III dam project and its potential effects on indigenous peoples in surrounding

areas, ... there is a need for concerted efforts to carry out adequate consultations with affected groups and to endeavour to reach consensus with them on all aspects of the project affecting them” (para. 13).

I would like to reiterate to your Excellency’s Government these observations and recommendations. I hope that the People’s Republic of China will, within the scope of its responsibility and influence over the Gibe III project, continue to evaluate and take measures to strengthen the compliance of the project with relevant international human rights standards, including those related specifically to indigenous peoples.

Please note that I will continue to monitor this situation and I welcome any additional information that your Excellency’s Government may deem relevant in relation to this case.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

James Anaya  
Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples