

Thank you Mr. Chairman

Thank you to my indigenous family here from around the world and to the Haudenosaunee, the original inhabitants of this land. We thank you for allowing us to speak today on agenda item focusing on human rights at the 11th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples remains the foremost instrument through which Indigenous Peoples can stand up for their rights and freedoms.

To that end we respectfully put forth the following recommendations:

1. In the interest of enhancing capacity building for youth to participate in decision-making processes in UN bodies, we urge the forum to partner with the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus as well as relevant UN agencies to provide training courses geared towards promoting youth involvement. In a lot of cases, youths are simply unaware of their Indigenous rights as outlined in the UNDRIP and the mechanisms through which they can advocate for their rights. Many countries do not make available information regarding Indigenous rights and even go so far as to prevent the dissemination of such information. The establishment of training courses run by such UN agencies as UNICEF would be a crucial first step in addressing this issue. Furthermore, these courses should take place throughout the year and be geared towards mainstreaming Indigenous participation in UN bodies across the UN system. To facilitate access, we also recommend courses be available through an internet-based medium and scholarship programs be established to so as not to exclude any individuals who lack the funds to travel to training locations. The UN can assist NGOs with expertise to provide necessary courses to enhance Indigenous youth engagement at all levels to protect their rights.
2. Governments must implement previous recommendations regarding Indigenous youth and follow the procedures of the treaty bodies when addressing the recommendations. Recommendations put forward by treaty bodies such as CERD, UPR, and CEDAW should be implemented immediately and with full participation of Indigenous youth. Indigenous youth must also have full and effective participation in the follow-up mechanisms of UN Treaty Bodies. Active roles in these follow-up mechanisms will ensure Indigenous youth voices are heard and pressure governments to be accountable.
3. The UPR must address the human rights of Indigenous youth and children. States under review must include Indigenous youth participation at the national level in preparation for the review and in implementation of the recommendations. The UPR recommendations should also be widely distributed through social media, youth forums, and other popular cultural forums in order to disseminate information regarding developments of the UPR. Furthermore, a

national consultation process should be established where Indigenous youth can have direct input in the questions that member states put forth to the state under review. More important, recommendations must be generated from the grassroots inspired by youth perspectives.

4. We urge member states to pay particular attention to the different expressions of violence and systematic violations against Indigenous youth. Member states must address all past infringements of Indigenous youth rights, as mentioned in Article 40 of the UNDRIP. Our lands, territories and natural resources continue to be monopolized by large multinational companies without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous authorities. We recommend that the special Representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises work together with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to address such issues with specific focus on Indigenous youth.

5. Governments must respect and not interfere with Indigenous Peoples' right to self-identification. Governments strategically subvert respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples by denying their status as Indigenous. For instance, in Vietnam the government tactically denies the status of Indigenous Peoples, such as the Khmer Krom of the Mekong Delta. Detrimental impacts of government control of Indigenous identification are further illustrated by the situation in Finland where the exploitation of Indigenous rights by non-Indigenous Peoples has started to emerge. Government bodies are allowing non-Indigenous Peoples to identify as Indigenous, thereby violating Sámi right to self-determination as guaranteed in article 33 of the UNDRIP. This violation undermines the legitimacy of Indigenous Peoples' rights and their struggles. The power to designate Indigenous status should rest with Indigenous communities and their chosen representatives.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm our support and appreciation of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and we feel the recommendations raised today will lead to a better understanding and implementation of the UNDRIP.

Thank you.