

Thank you Madame Chairperson :

My name is Lucinda Minde. I would like to address Agenda number 9 on Indigenous Peoples and their Relationship to Land.

The discriminatory Laws which govern Indigenous Lands in my Country have to change in order to respect the spirit and intent of our sacred Treaties. Foreign as well as domestic governments have exercised a policy of complete extinguishment of Aboriginal title since the first colonists arrived on our Eastern shores of our Country. After a conflict in which England defeated France, England purportedly acquired possession of any interests that France had, including aboriginal lands that had been settled by the French colonists. King George III of England signed the Royal Proclamation of 1763, spelling out how Indigenous lands could be acquired by the Governors of the New Colonies. Crown representatives called representatives of Indigenous Nations to a meeting specifically for the surrender and subsequent extinguishment of aboriginal title to the land.

The Treaties with Indigenous Peoples of Canada have followed the process outlined in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. When the Confederation of Canada took place on July 1, 1867, the Federal Government and the newly formed provinces divided up jurisdictional powers, the Indigenous Peoples of this newly formed country had their right to self-determination and their right to aboriginal title taken away from them without their consent.

Under the Canadian Constitution of 1867, we the Indigenous Peoples became a Federal jurisdiction, specifically Section 91. (24) Indians and lands reserved for Indians. The Federal government compiled all Laws pertaining to Indians and produced the Indian Act. The Indian Act contains a number discriminatory laws on how Aboriginal lands could be taken. Vast tracts of land have been taken from us in the process of Treaty making. It became easy for the Crown representatives to make verbal promises, many of which have not been respected. Our ancestors believed, as they were told by Crown representatives that the text of these legally binding Treaties conformed to the verbal explanation the Leaders were given. It was on this basis that we gave our solemn commitment.

With the ever increasing populations of many Reservations in Canada, land is becoming a precious commodity. There is a problem of overcrowding on many reservations, such as in our case. For every 160 acre $\frac{1}{4}$ section of land there is an average of three to five families. This is putting a strain on our land base which is used for agriculture. For every home we lose an average of 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres, this is used up for roads sanitation and waterwells. For every water well that has been drilled in the past twenty years, we are seeing the water table underneath our Reservation going down, thus increasing the cost of well maintenance.

There is great difficulty for Indigenous Nations to try and add more land to their landbase compared to the simplicity of taking it away. In order to replace land that the Federal Government had alienated from our original territory, Our leaders had to buy land near our Reservation in order to try and expand our agricultural landbase. The Federal government and the Government of Alberta have refused to change the status of this land by not permitting us to re-integrate this land back to the reservation.

Madame Chair, We want the land and the mineral rights, Aboriginal title, but not aboriginal title that can be extinguished. It is our right to have these things which were taken away from us in violation of our International Rights. These are serious claims which we intend to pursue until they are satisfied.

Thank you.

**Lucinda Minde
University Student**