

From: Kent Lebsock
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Subject: Owe Aku Position on the Declaration

Owe Aku acknowledges the enormous efforts and resources committed by our leaders and elders over these many years in drafting a Declaration that acknowledges our histories, our cultures, our relationship with our territories, our treaties, and, of course, the sovereignty of our nations.

We acknowledge their spirit and faith in human rights.

We acknowledge their wisdom in a seeking a just and balanced approach that would bring our peoples to international forums.

Following our leaders and elders, we have participated in good faith, believing the words of the non-Native world that said we were a part of the process.

Time and time again, we supported the compromises in the Declaration's preambular paragraphs and articles and finally agreed to the Declaration as passed by the Human Rights Council and submitted to the General Assembly.

However, we know of no process that allowed Indigenous representatives to participate in any fair, equal or just process in the events leading to the present compromise being called the "9 changes."

We have had no opportunity to comment, to accept or reject the changes, or to even discuss them with our people. The "9 changes" were, in fact, presented as a fait accompli, again with a series of "promises" attached to this latest surrender..

As people of the Lakota Nation, we see a continuation of the colonial process in which terms are dictated to us with the same outcome as the Doctrine of Discovery and the Law of Nations.

Indeed, we were given information about 48 hours ago forcing us to support, oppose or passively agree to the changes. In our history, we have seen this tactic used many times. When colonizing powers want lands and resources our leaders have been isolated, cut off from the peoples' point of view and forced into accepting dictated terms.

Since this is a Declaration of standards which, in effect, is a suggestion of best practices, and member nations cannot see their way clear to granting Indigenous peoples the same rights granted to all other peoples and acknowledge our equality as peoples;

We therefore OPPOSE submittal of any version of the Declaration to the General Assembly other than the version of the Human Rights Council passed with the participation of Indigenous peoples.

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