

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Eleventh session, New York, 7-18 May 2012

Agenda Item 4: Human rights: (b) Dialogue with the UN Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, International Indian Treaty Council Intervention presented by Andrea Carmen May 15th, 2012

Thank you Madame Chair. I want to express myself in this Forum on behalf of the International Indian Treaty Council and also personally regarding the recent visit of the UN Special Rapporteur James Anaya to the United States. We were very honored to be able to assist the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and his staff in coordinating some of the site visits and consultations during this recent historic country visit.

His visit was of great importance to Indigenous Peoples, not only for those whose traditional lands are now considered to be part of the United States, but for Indigenous Peoples around the world as it focused specifically on the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in a wide range of situations and concerns. This was the first time the Special Rapporteur carried out a country visit with such a focus.

The IITC was honored to co-sponsor and co-coordinate two of these consultations held at Rosebud Reservation Sinte Gleska University on May 1st -2nd and at Chickaloon Native Village Ya Ni Dah Ah Tribal School in Alaska on April 28th, in conjunction with the International Indigenous Women Symposium on Environmental and Reproductive Health. These visits and the others he carried out around the US were of great significance to many many Indigenous Peoples, those who submitted their testimonies electronically and those who were able to address him personally in Washington DC, Tucson Arizona, Rosebud Reservation South Dakota, Portland Oregon, Tulsa Oklahoma and several Tribal areas in Alaska.

I was personally present at the site visit of the Rapporteur on April 28th to Chickaloon Village and the Indigenous Women's Symposium. Among the presenters were the Traditional Chief and several Council members, a Yupik woman elder and well-known traditional healer, a 5 year old tribal school student and Indigenous women from a number of Villages, Tribes and Nations from around Alaska and the US.

My 14 year old granddaughter Sewa was one of these presenters, addressing the role of the strong Yaqui and Athabascan women in her family history, the importance for her as an Indigenous young person of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the current struggle of her village against coal strip mining. Many of the presenters, young and old, shed tears as they poured their hearts out to the Rapporteur addressing not only their Peoples' current

struggles but the inter-connected and ongoing impacts of inter-generational trauma from resource extraction, loss of language and culture, displacement from traditional lands, destruction of life-sustaining fish, plants and animals, and the forced removal of children to boarding schools.

The presenters, young and old, never doubted for a minute that the Rapporteur was not only documenting the facts and cases they were presenting but was hearing with his own heart the pain, commitment and hope they were expressing to him from their own hearts. I thank you again on my own and on their behalf.

Special Rapporteur Anaya, Jim, the next steps and the full report of this country visit are in your hands. We once again express our full faith and confidence in you in this regard. Cheoque utesia, Thank you.