

Statement of Mr. Daniel W. Rivera

19/05/05, # 36 17

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CAUCUS OF THE
GREATER CARIBBEAN (IPCGC)**

THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES
16 – 27 MAY, 2005

Honorable Madame Chair, we the **Indigenous Peoples Caucus of the Greater Caribbean**, which includes Guyana, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela, congratulate you and the new members of the Permanent Forum on your historic appointments.¹

We have convened here at the Fourth Session to present regional perspectives on Millennium Development Goal 2, “Achieve universal primary education” and we recommend:

1. That states provide the resources necessary to develop, with the full and effective participation of indigenous people, multilingual, multicultural primary education programs for indigenous peoples, especially where there is absence of the necessary law to provide this.
2. That states recognize the inherent rights of allodial title of indigenous peoples, so that we may, according to our own values, customs, traditions, and Cosmovisions develop, restore and maintain our collective sustainable sources of living that are necessary to guarantee our way of life.² An example of this recognition can be found in the constitution of Venezuela.
3. That where the ancestral languages have been replaced by the dominant language, or not being used as a result of the actions of governments, assimilation and acculturation policies the states and other relevant UN Bodies, provide the resources, technical, or other assistance necessary to develop language immersion programs to restore and revitalize those languages. This should include indigenous nations divided by international borders.

¹ Following the model of the Association of Caribbean States, the Greater Caribbean is defined here as an area of cooperation in recognition of the common ancestral heritage and common geographic space shared by the Indigenous Peoples of this region. At the 2005 session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the following entities were represented via the IPCGC: Consejo General de Taíno Borincanos, Guyana Organization of Indigenous Peoples (GOIP), Hoboshirima Arawak Community of Venezuela, Nacion Taina de Las Antillas, and the U.S. Regional Coordinating Office of the United Confederation of Taíno People.

² Allodial System: Absolute ownership of land, free from rent or service.

4. That where indigenous peoples are divided by states borders those states create with the full and effective participation of indigenous people educational exchange programs and adequate mechanisms to facilitate language proficient teachers to cross borders for the purposes of assisting other indigenous peoples in the restoration and revitalization of their ancestral languages In addition, the states and other relevant UN Bodies shall provide the necessary resources, technical or other resources necessary to implement this recommendation.

5. That those states or countries of the Greater Caribbean that have not undertaken constitutional reform or other legislative measures to recognize the rights of indigenous peoples, with the full effective participation of indigenous peoples initiate the appropriate constitutional reforms or other legislative measures to recognize the existence, identity and rights culture, traditions, customs, lands territories and natural resources

6. That states, with the full effective participation of indigenous peoples review all education materials to eliminate any discriminatory and derogatory contents and erroneous historical accounts that make Indigenous Peoples invisible, subject to ridicule, or in any way misrepresents them

7. In order to ensure proper follow up the issues recommended to the Permanent Forum, there is need for the Indigenous Peoples of the Greater Caribbean and other countries who are involved in this process to be engaged in preparatory meetings before the next session is convened. With this in mind, the Permanent Forum and other relevant UN Bodies must provide funding as well as the necessary technical and other resources towards this. We would also welcome the support of NGOs, funding agencies to assist in this initiative.

Madame Chair, and distinguished delegates, we thank you for your patience and the opportunity to submit these recommendations.