

Pacific Caucus on Indigenous Issues

2nd Consultation Workshop

Brisbane

26 - 28 April 2005



Intervention presented to the UN PFII

In due respect to the Haudenoshonee, the traditional custodians of this land, and in recognition of all our Elders past and present.

Madam Chairperson, my name is Lynette Riley-Mundine a member of the Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi Nations of Australia. I take the floor to present this report on behalf of the Pacific Caucus of Indigenous Peoples.

This report arises from the Second Consultation Workshop of the Pacific Caucus on Indigenous Issues. The Pacific Caucus is an informal association of Indigenous delegations participating in the sessions of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. We appreciate that extra speaking time will be allowed for this statement on behalf of many Indigenous Peoples' delegations, including those unable to attend.

The Second Pacific Consultations Workshop was held on 26 to 28 April 2005 in Brisbane, Australia. The workshop was attended by fifty-four participants from fifteen States and Territories in the Pacific basin. This wide representation ensures that the voice of the Indigenous Peoples from this region – most of whom are not able to attend these UN meetings – can be heard.

The outcome of the workshop is represented in the fourteen (14) groups of recommendations contained in this report. All recommendations were adopted by consensus and complement the recommendations arising from the first Consultation Workshop held in 2004.

The participants in the workshop express their appreciation to the Representative on the Permanent Forum, Professor Mick Dodson, for his presence at the workshop, and also to Ms Mililani Trask, the former, and first, representative from the region on the Permanent Forum, for her contribution to the understanding of the Permanent Forum and the United Nations.

Thanks must be given to the sponsors of this workshop, as their contribution was vital for the gathering of Indigenous Peoples from throughout the Pacific Region to occur. The sponsors' support for this most important regional activity should be widely recognised.

Madam Chairperson, the resolutions contained in this report provide evidence of the importance placed upon the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues by the Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific. The Permanent Forum is asked to consider how an annual regional workshop of the Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific might be enhanced in the future to advance the work of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and how representatives from the Pacific Region – being both State and Indigenous Peoples' nominees – can be assisted to establish their regional presence and availability to the Indigenous Peoples.

Madam Chairperson, I bring attention now to Resolution 6 which is headed Goal Two of the Millennium Development Goals – Achieve Universal Primary Education, this resolution contains ten (10) recommendations; and Resolution 7 of the Pacific Consultations Workshop which is headed,

Indigenous Peoples and Education, this resolution contains four (4) recommendations, along with five (5) concerns and understandings.

The Pacific Caucus of Indigenous Peoples in consensus state, that we agree that there is need to have a requirement to determine an agreement on what constitutes a universal primary education, but would comment as has been previously noted in previous reports, with statements such as:

“For the most part, indigenous peoples are virtually invisible in the formal education systems for the urban and rural non-indigenous population. What is more they are often treated with contempt and subjected to discrimination in history, geography, literature, art and social studies text and by their own teachers. Real intercultural education must be taught in educational systems nationwide, for only then will the human rights of indigenous peoples be fully realised”.

R. Stavenhagen, UN Sp. Rapporteur in Indigenous Peoples- para 67 E/CN.4/2005/88 – 6 Jan 2005 – Report to 61st session of commission on Human Rights.

Since the inception of the UNPFII in 2002 there have been significant efforts undertaken to assess the current status of national education programs and their impact on Indigenous children and to a lesser extent women and peoples.

The Right to Education

The right to education is a human right recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the two international covenants on human rights, the CERD Convention, the Convention against Discrimination in Education and the ILO Convention No.169. It is addressed in the convention on the Rights of the Child, a binding international convention that specifically mentions the indigenous child.

The scope of the right to education has been expanded upon by other international instruments. For example the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights affirms that individuals have a right to be member of a language group and that such groups have collective rights to have their language and culture taught. Articles 15 and 16 of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples support and broaden this concept to include the promise that indigenous culture, tradition and histories should be reflected in all form of education.

In 2004 and 2005 the UN system undertook initiatives to further assess issues relating to indigenous peoples educational needs and the impediments which prevent the full realization of the right to education by indigenous peoples.

In October 2004 UNESCO and the UNHCHR sponsored an expert seminar on this topic in Paris. It was attended by 60 persons including state representatives, indigenous educators, educational experts, UN staff and the UN Special Rapporteur on Education and Indigenous Peoples. Its conclusion findings and recommendations are reported in document E/CN.4/2005/88/Add.4
15 December 2004.

The Report identifies several major impediments to the full enjoyment of the human right to education by indigenous peoples. These include:

1. Lack of respect for cultural diversity and xenophobia;
2. Racial discrimination;
3. economic and social disparities between Indigenous Peoples and non-indigenous peoples;
4. natural physical obstacles – distance, lack of transport;
5. nation state policies that are discriminatory;
6. lack and program evaluation to identify and correct problems;
7. bias against indigenous women and girls in educational services;
8. ethnic and cultural biases in schools, materials, teachers and curricula;
9. isolation of migratory Indigenous Peoples;
10. failure to educate in Indigenous languages; and
11. exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from the processes of creating and managing Indigenous schools and courses.

The Report recommended that states should undertake corrective measures including:

1. institute special measures to address racism and bias in the educational system;
2. involve Indigenous Peoples in educational design and development;
3. include indigenous culture, history, values and traditions in educational programs;
4. research and address special needs of Indigenous women and children,
5. involve Indigenous educators in design and teaching;
6. evaluate bilingual and multicultural approaches to education;
7. educate on Human Rights; and
8. combat the impact of external debt in poor countries and involve the multilateral financing bodies.

The Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples also filed a Report to the 61st Commission on Human Rights. E/CN.4/2005/88 6 January 2005.

The Rapporteur identified several impediments to Indigenous peoples rights to education and found that the goal of universal primary education for Indigenous peoples had not been achieved.

He identified several impediments to achievement of the goal including:

1. geographical dispersion,
2. isolation and physical distance,
3. lack of financial resources,
4. substandard education,
5. lack of teachers and modern technologies,
6. poor sanitation,
7. child labour at home and in the market place,
8. discrimination in language and curricula,
9. discriminatory national policies,
10. sex and gender bias.

He found that education was being used to further assimilation and called for states to abandon this pedagogical model. He recommended several solutions including:

1. educate in mother tongue,
2. educate in the context of the local community,

3. develop bilingual and intercultural and educational programs,
4. adopt national legislation to provide for Indigenous education,
5. train and employ Indigenous educators,
6. create educational programs to meet specific needs of Indigenous children in penal institutions

He also discussed several prototype models of Indigenous educational programs being used globally.

His report also called upon UNHCHR, UNESCO, WGIP to address indigenous special needs with studies and programs. Indigenous peoples were requested to inform the Special Rapporteur of Human Rights violations, to get involved and to advocate for their reports to education.

In addition to these reports the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has for 3 years addressed the issue of Indigenous education under its thematic mandate. In 2005 the Forum will address this issue once again under the Millennium Development Goal #2. In 2004, the Forum recommended that States enact legislation and adopt national education policies in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, communities and students; that States hire Indigenous educators, that they incorporate Indigenous knowledge in primary and secondary education curricula and that States support the training of Indigenous peoples so that they manage their own educational systems.

Resolution 6 - of the Pacific Caucus of Indigenous Peoples in due consideration to the issues under the topic of:

Goal Two of the Millennium Development Goals – Achieve Universal Primary Education

1. *Recommend* that the Permanent Forum create a tracking and follow-up procedure in order to monitor the implementation of recommendations made in its own reports, as well as those of the Special Rapporteur and the expert seminar on Education;
2. *Recommend* that the Permanent Forum work with the UNDP (the lead agency on the Millennium Development Goals) and the Special Rapporteurs on Indigenous Peoples and Education to establish workable benchmarks and a timetable for agencies and specialised bodies of the UN to implement recommendations contained in the three reports. This in order that the UNPFII be able to advise the ECOSOC on progress being made by the UN System and its member states in implementing the Millennium Development Goals;
3. *Recommend* that the Permanent Forum should initiate an effort to bring Indigenous Peoples with technology backgrounds to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunisia and should send Permanent Forum experts to Tunisia to participate;
4. *Recommend also* that the UNPFII supports language in the WSIS document that recommends that States and the private sector support the application of technology for the education of Indigenous children and teachers in their mother tongue;
5. *Recommend also* that the UNPFII Secretariat include the Pacific Voices initiative, that was presented at the first Global Forum Education Panel, in the activities of the second WSIS;

6. *Recommend* that the Permanent Forum, along with UNESCO and WGIP inform itself regarding the Pacific prototype models in education, based on families being the first teachers. These models include: Kohanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa Maori, Kamehameha Schools, Punanga Leo and Whare Wananga;
7. *Recommend* that the Permanent Forum recommend that States and civil society NGOs contribute financing to defray costs for education of Indigenous children too poor to pay for educational costs. Where possible States, should provide a free education to Indigenous children;
8. *Recommend* that the Permanent Forum recommend that States and the UNESCO work collectively with Indigenous educators to design models to decolonise educational programs for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children. In order to combat xenophobia and racism, programs to address racial bias in teachers and standard curricula should be funded and implemented;
9. *Recommend* that the Permanent Forum recommend that States and the UNESCO work collectively with Indigenous educators and traditional elders to design sex education curricula that implements appropriate cultural norms, practices and values;
10. *Recommend* that the Permanent Forum recommend that States, UNESCO and the Special Rapporteur on Refugees work collectively to design programs for the re-education and employment of Indigenous Peoples who due to population transfer policies, natural disasters and violence may have been dislocated.

Resolution 7 - of the Pacific Caucus of Indigenous Peoples in due consideration to the issues under the topic of:

Indigenous Peoples and Education

Note with concern that the UNESCO did not adopt a policy relating to Indigenous Peoples or Indigenous children during the first decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples;

Noting also that numerous recommendations have been made to UNESCO by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples, and the expert Seminar on Education, for implementation of initiatives, meetings and studies relating to Indigenous Peoples and children;

Understanding that no progress can reasonably be made on the implementation of these recommendations on Education and on Children without the willingness and cooperation of UNESCO;

Believing that without policies on Indigenous Peoples to guide its work, UNESCO will not be capable of effectively consulting with Indigenous Peoples nor of working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples to address and implement these important recommendations.

1. *Recommend* that the Permanent Forum, utilising the resources of its secretariat and of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, initiate consultations, between UNESCO and Indigenous Peoples' representatives and educators, for the purpose of advancing a policy for

UNESCO on Indigenous Education;

2. *Recommend* that the Permanent Forum ensure that all recommendations on Education, which have arisen from previous sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and which are directed to UNESCO, be addressed and, where possible, implemented in a timely and accountable process;
3. *Recommend* that funding and other resources, for consultations between UNESCO and Indigenous Peoples' representatives and educators, be provided by UNESCO;
4. *Recommend* that, in the event UNESCO is not able to prepare a policy by the end of 2005, the Permanent Forum look to the preparation of a draft policy or action plan in liaison with Indigenous Peoples' representatives, for subsequent consideration by the Economic and Social Council.

Madam Chairperson, this concludes the presentation of the Report of the Pacific Consultations Workshop. Delegates from the Pacific Caucus will present the remaining resolutions in the report under the relevant agenda items during this session of the Permanent Forum. I thank you for the opportunity to present this report and request that a report be made to the 5th Session on progress made and resources allocated.

Thank you.