



19/05/05 #360,12

**+United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
New York, May 19, 2005**

ITEM 3, GOAL 2 OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

“Achieve universal primary education” to be addressed under thematic approaches of language, culture, perspective and traditional knowledge:

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Bán Feasa na hEireann Margaret Connolly

A Cara, Madame Chairwoman, distinguished delegates, guests:

I bring you greetings and blessings from our Sacred Land.

The uneducated government has brought great pain to our people. The continuance of disrespect of our Sacred sites, including the Sacred Hill of Tara, is a desecration and scar on our people, our Spirit and our land, resulting in Spiritual turbulence and depression. Nearly 10% of our population resides in mental institutions, isolated. The suicide rate of our youth is the highest in Europe, yet we come from the most prosperous country in Europe. The harassment, blockage and lack of acknowledgement of our inherent human rights have caused continual difficulties of the most grievous nature to our indigenous population.

The uneducated government has failed to institute programs of any value to preserve our Traditional Sacred Ways, our language, and our inherent human rights.

Retrieve Foundation has alleviated many sicknesses of the Spirit through our indigenous programs. Retrieve Foundation has initiated and fulfilled independent educational pilot programs for the restoration and preservation of our Traditional Ways, all on a voluntary basis and without receiving any outside funding. Our results have been phenomenal. Lives have been saved. Our women hold the key to the Sacred Knowledge and have transmitted this knowledge, this Sacredness to their children and youth.

The Irish people have asked me to represent them here today to educate our government on the urgent need to protect our inherent human rights as an indigenous people.

Today, we are mandating the elected Irish government to amend our constitution:

- To include and uphold our indigenous human rights. This includes each individual's right of choice and sovereignty over their own lifestyle and Spirituality.
- To promote the defense of collective social and property rights related to environment, education, and intellectual heritage of the indigenous peoples of our land.
- To register our mother tongue (Gaeilige) as a national language.
- To implement accessible, living, indigenous educational programs for our children and adults, from the primary level through lifelong learning programs, with government cooperation and support.
- To uphold the right of our indigenous peoples to celebrate our indigenous day annually on the ninth day of the ninth month, in honor of our ancestors and our indigenous knowledge.

All of this is necessary to protect our innate indigenous traditions.

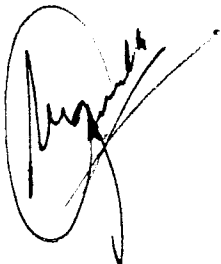
Today, I have placed an application with UNESCO to help us expedite these amendments. Our government has a responsibility to our children to protect their right to know and understand their indigenous ways. I urge UNESCO to accept our application, allowing us to bring peace, mutual respect, cooperation and healing between the elected government on our land and the Indigenous Peoples of our land, so our Heritage and Sacred Knowledge will not be lost or destroyed.

Thanking you.

Is Mise

Margaret Connolly

Bán Feasa na hEireann

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Connolly', enclosed within a large, loopy circular flourish.