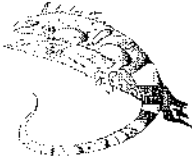


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Secretariat of: BGC CAIPCD CAIPCM Abya Yala-Caribbean 500+ OASIPC AIPC IIPTT
HIPMIC SLCHR COHARDAR IAAR IMRRC SIDS 2005 Mauritius Initiative

Fourth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues New York, 16-27 May 2005

Special theme: Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples:

3(b) Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals: "Achieve universal primary education", to be addressed under the thematic approaches of language, cultural perspectives and traditional knowledge.

Collective Statement on behalf of the Caribbean Antilles Indigenous Peoples Caucus & the Diaspora.

The role of appropriate universal primary education is of paramount importance for the dignity and self-esteem of the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean Antilles. While the Caribbean Antilles States have over the past decade increased their expenditures on education, the quality and quantity of the education system continue to depend on a colonial past that has deliberately neglected the collective history of the Indigenous Peoples. Stereotyping of, racial and derogatory attacks on the integrity of the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean Antilles continue to manifest their presence at all levels, including State institutions. While most Caribbean Antilles States claim to promote equity of access and increased opportunity and equality services in the area of education, there is little Constitutional recognition of Indigenous Peoples.

Recommendations:

(1) The Caribbean Antilles Indigenous Peoples Caucus & the Diaspora call upon the Forum to inform UNESCO and other relevant United Nations Organizations to provide direct technical and financial support to the Bethechilokono of Saint Lucia initiative, "Abya Yala-Caribbean 500+", which seeks to document the authentic history and cultures of Caribbean Antilles Indigenous Peoples.

(2) The Forum recommends that the Caribbean Antilles States initiate constitutional and educational reform to recognize and respect the indigenous cultures of the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean Antilles. While the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean Antilles do receive some form of education, in the absence of Educational Policies that take into account their educational needs, the creation of Indigenous Peoples Institutions that guarantee the conservation of an environment permitting the right to function as a distinct people, is of the greatest importance.

(3) The formal education system remains a preserve of Spanish, English, French and Dutch. No official policy permits the use of Kweyol or other indigenous languages in the classroom. The use of the mother-tongue in education derives strength from their traditional knowledge which sustains their traditional occupations. "Education, when it is culturally appropriate, promotes mother tongue learning and includes indigenous knowledge in the curriculum, can help defend against the negative impacts of cultural globalization". The Forum call upon the States of the Caribbean Antilles to review and develop educational systems that allows for learning and instruction to be pursued in the mother-tongue language, and to ensure that access to education is not denied to vulnerable groups on the basis of linguistic ability and criteria. The Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean Antilles have retained much of the culture of their ancestors, constituted in the language, traditional knowledge, traditional occupations, innovations and oral traditions.

(4) Acknowledging that the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean Antilles and their relatives in the Diaspora are some of the least connected people technology-wise, the Caribbean Antilles Indigenous Peoples Caucus & the Diaspora has initiated a move to identify key challenges, solutions and priorities to overcome the digital divide. The Caribbean Antilles Indigenous Peoples Caucus & the Diaspora call upon the United Nations and subsidiary bodies, UNICEF, UNITAR and in particular UNESCO, through the International Programmes for the development of communication (IPDC) to provide the necessary technical and financial assistance to develop and maintain the Caribbean Antilles Indigenous Peoples Communication Mechanism, which shall do, but not limited to the following:

- :1. Facilitate, support and promote the exchange and dissemination of relevant information, through the establishment of links with networks and other existing information mechanisms, particularly to support initiatives related to the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean Antilles.
- : 2. Promote the respect, preservation and maintenance of knowledge, innovations and practices of the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean Antilles in the development of the network.
- : 3. Accommodate multi-language use.
- : 4. Provide awareness for:
 - (b) Indigenous Peoples Histories on line;
 - (c) The adaptation and amalgamation of traditional Indigenous Peoples' styles and ways of communication with emerging information technologies;
 - (e) Indigenous Peoples' culture and digital cultural development;
 - (g) Territorial management and modern technologies.

(5) The Forum call upon United Nations, UNESCO and other relevant United Nations Organizations to, with immediate effect "institute a programme of Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean Antilles cultural identity", with the full and effective participation of Caribbean Antilles Indigenous Peoples' Experts, which will allow for recognizing the indigenous names and their significance to the Indigenous Peoples concerned.

(6) The Forum reiterates that the Caribbean Antilles States include representatives of Indigenous Peoples in their National Commission for UNESCO, and seek the free, prior and informed consent of the Indigenous Peoples concerned, before the implementation of any UNESCO sponsored programme.

(7) The Caribbean Antilles Indigenous Peoples Caucus & the Diaspora repeat its call to UNESCO to recognize the contributions of the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean Antilles as the descendants of the First Peoples of **Abya Yala**, and provide technical and financial assistance to individual Indigenous Peoples' Governing Councils of the Caribbean Antilles, in particular those in Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, for the execution of cultural research projects.

(8) The Caribbean Antilles Indigenous Peoples Caucus & the Diaspora recommend that the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, WIPO and other UN Agencies provide technical support and funding for the execution of a Programme in the establishment of a Registry of the **Bethchilokono** of Saint Lucia Intellectual Properties; for the registration of such Intellectual Properties and for overseeing the general conduct of the Intellectual Properties Registry.



Dr. Albert DeTerville, Executive Chairperson