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**JOINT STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS YOUTH CAUCUS  
IN RE: MDG 2 – PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR ALL**

4<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNPFII | 20 May 2005

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As Indigenous Youth, we highlight and demand the need to focus on traditional indigenous education systems that will incorporate our traditional knowledge of justice system, health, environment, and most importantly language, to fortify our cultural identities as Indigenous Peoples. Language is the foundation of any culture; if the language is lost there is no culture. Indigenous Youth, in all nations are faced with assimilation into mainstream society resulting in the loss of traditional teachings of our ancestors survival of our own Indigenous Cultures.

The youth caucus would therefore wish to humbly make the following recommendations to the UN Permanent Forum by urging governments and UN agencies to:

1. With special mention of the UNESCO, work collaboratively with Indigenous elders, educators, historians another relevant experts to develop educational or academic curriculums on indigenous culture and history that shall be taught to youths, whether indigenous or non-indigenous.
2. Adopt Indigenous long-term education policies whereby governments allow indigenous representatives, elected by the indigenous people themselves, take full part in the educational decision making process. For this purpose, an adequate budget for such an Indigenous educational system should be created.

In this light, we urge our elders and the state to adopt educational programmes for indigenous youths pertaining to:

- State History (particularly political, constitutional, and treaties made with indigenous peoples)
  - Indigenous Cultural Heritage
  - Decolonisation
3. Review their educational districting and allocation of services so as to provide indigenous youths access to educational facilities, transportation, and subsidies so as to allow and make it convenient for them to go to and stay in school;

4. Adopt a system of education that would pro-actively empower and eliminate the low self-esteem that indigenous youths develops due to the cultural uniqueness in order to eliminate such "schools of depression".
5. Because the preservation of languages is essential to the well being of the future generation of indigenous peoples, indigenous schools must employ the respective indigenous community's native language as a medium of instruction;
6. That schools have instructors who are indigenous;
7. Emphasize to the UNDP and UNICEF the need for funding of classes for girls taught by health experts, traditional healers as well as modern health workers, to better understand their bodies and establish a healthy view of themselves and build their self-confidence;

Also, the program be designed and implemented be designed for both indigenous and non-indigenous children and youths with a meaningful inclusion of an indigenous perspective, including the use of indigenous language where appropriate. Likewise, it must be ensured that information about the perspectives of indigenous people be incorporated into the text books and curricula of all primary and mainstream schools.

8. Educational must:
  - a. Place additional efforts into the documentation of indigenous peoples histories and knowledge documented by the respective indigenous peoples themselves to free them from external biases;
  - b. Adopt courses or classes on indigenous peoples which would uplift their dignity which should be made mandatory within all educational programs; and
  - c. Review existing educational material that makes reference to indigenous people and verify its accuracy.
9. The Permanent forum must conduct an analysis on the impact of the WTO general agreement on trade and services upon indigenous communities, as we indigenous youth are concerned about the impact of the potential privatization of public libraries and schools.
10. That countries invite the Special Rapporteur for Education to investigate primary education programs with the participation of indigenous peoples organizations and civil society and provide recommendations.
11. The forum encourages all delegations to include a youth representative properly briefed on the mandates, systems and operations of the permanent forum.