

**Second Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous
Issues,
New York, May 12th - 23rd, 2003**

Statement of the Indigenous Women Caucus

We, the Indigenous Women attending the Second Session of UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues have met together and have come up with the statement as our contribution for achieving respect, recognition and the affirmation of our roles and responsibilities that we have been taking for the rights our peoples and in creating a just and peaceful world.

The indigenous women are the traditional caretakers of Mother Earth and the keepers of our traditional wisdom which embodies our spirituality and cosmo vision.

Indigenous women are the givers and keepers of life on this earth. We are the life force and continuing link necessary for the regeneration of our communities and the survival of our nations. We are the historians and the carriers of culture. Indigenous women are central to the health and well-being of our families, our nations and our world- the mother earth..

Because indigenous women maintain the well-being of our nations, we have been targeted for destruction through the process of genocide, colonization, and economic globalisation. Our traditional roles in our communities and the world have been diminished through these destructive processes. We, indigenous women, continue to work together to restore balance required for mutual respect between women and men based on our indigenous knowledge and traditional teachings..

We therefore, call for the support of all peoples in recognizing that the well-being of our nations is dependent upon the well-being of indigenous women. We therefore request that the Permanent Forum supports our the following recommendation.

Recommendations:

1. We call on the Permanent Forum to make indigenous women the theme of the next Permanent Forum, 2004.
2. We urge the PF to recommend that the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to assess state legislation that does not address discriminatory legal provisions as they particularly pertain to indigenous women. Further, we ask the Permanent Forum to urge states to take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against indigenous women and girls. We call for immediate measures to be taken to remove against all forms of sexual exploitation and end the trafficking of women and to remove all obstacles to gender equality.
3. We urge the PF to recommend that the UNDP and WHO to investigate the use of coercive and racially discriminatory reproductive health policies against indigenous women.
4. We urge the PF to request that States take responsibility for the violence in our communities that have resulted from human rights violations perpetrated by state policies. States should further address the inter-generational historical trauma that indigenous peoples have suffered as a result of colonization. States should provide adequate resources to address the needs of the survivors of emotional, physical, mental, spiritual and social violence.
5. We urge the Permanent Forum to ask States to design, implement, monitor and evaluate, with the full and effective participation of indigenous women, gender-sensitive policies and programmes that will foster the empowerment and advancement of indigenous women.
6. We request the Permanent Forum to form an advisory body composed of elders, youth and children. We recommend an Indigenous Women representative and an elder representative be positioned in this advisory body

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson for this opportunity to put forth these aforementioned recommendations pertaining to Indigenous women's priorities.