

United Nation Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Tenth Session
UN Headquarters, New York, May 16 to 27, 2011

AGENDA ITEM 4 b): Human Rights Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples

Statement presented by Commissioner Wilton Littlechild, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

As this is the first time I take the floor, I would like to congratulate the Chair and new members of the Permanent Forum on your appointment. As I reflect back on the last ten years of the Permanent Forum, I recall the debates in Geneva when I had the honour to co-chair the working group on the name of the Permanent Forum. There were many proposals, all of which were against the full recognition of Indigenous Peoples except one. Since then, I'm sure all will agree we have come a long distance towards being welcomed into the family of Nations. This was the dream of our Elders who stated when we embarked on this international journey for justice, "all we want is respect and recognition."

Over the past decade, these significant related events occurred. First, the adoption of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the creation of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Progressive change started with the adoption of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of "Indigenous Peoples."* It is important to highlight that this change is reflected in the name of both mechanisms, the Special Rapporteur and the Expert Mechanism, where the term "Indigenous Peoples" is used.

As a Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, I look to support significant Acts of Reconciliation that will restore respectful relationships. We would agree that as we go towards the next decade, it will be important for the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and ECOSOC to show leadership by joining this progressive movement towards full recognition of Indigenous Peoples. The time is now at this 10th Anniversary, as an Act of Reconciliation, to change the name of this important UN Permanent Forum.

We therefore make one recommendation:

The Members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues of this 10th Session decides to change the name to "UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples" and urge the ECOSOC at its next session to join this Act of Reconciliation and request the General Assembly's approval for this name change.