

Mr Chairman (43) (1)

Read by Lucy Mutenkei
African Indigenous Women Org
Organizer

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Could like on behalf of the African group, join the rest of the participants to congratulate you for being elected the chair of this meeting.

We as African Indigenous women are happy that we are ~~now~~ able to attend such important forums, and fully support the formation of the permanent forum for Indigenous peoples at the United Nations and pray that you guide us to the success of the deliberations.

Having a permanent forum means a permanent voice for the Indigenous peoples. The African Indigenous people would like to bring to the attention of this Conference on the recommendation passed by the Indigenous peoples in Arusha on 18th to 22nd January 1999 in the support of the permanent forum.

- Read.

(2)

CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FROM EASTERN, CENTRAL
AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

18-22 January 1999,
Arusha, Tanzania

THE ARUSHA DECLARATION ON THE PERMANENT FORUM FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS

We the indigenous representatives from Africa meeting in Arusha, Tanzania,

Recalling the recommendation from the World Conference on Human Rights pertaining to the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous peoples within the United Nations;

Bearing in mind that the goal of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (1995-2004) is to strengthen international cooperation in order to solve problems faced by indigenous peoples;

Recalling that the General Assembly has identified the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous peoples within the United Nations as one of the major objectives of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples;

Supporting existing indigenous declarations on the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous peoples, in particular the Temuco, Kuna Yala, Indore and Arctic indigenous declarations;

We call for a speedy creation of a permanent forum for indigenous peoples within the United Nations;

The permanent forum should be established at the highest possible level within the United Nations, and no lower than at the level of the Economic and Social Council;

Indigenous peoples and governments should be members of the permanent forum, with the right to vote. An equal number of indigenous and governmental representatives should be elected as members for a period of four years;

Indigenous organisations, communities and peoples and governments that are not members of the Forum, should together with non-governmental organisations, United Nations agencies and individual experts be invited to participate as observers at the meetings of the permanent forum;

The mandate of the permanent forum should be broad enough to cover the concerns of indigenous peoples, including cultural, civil, political and economic rights, health issues, the rights of women and children, education, development, the environment, human rights and conflict prevention and resolution;

The creation of the permanent forum, and its activities, should be funded through the regular budget of the United Nations; and

A separate secretariat should be created for the permanent forum, staffed by qualified indigenous persons.

Kuna