

International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development

An NGO in consultative status to the United Nations
Economic and Social Council

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INTERVENTION 1 OPENING SESSION; GENERAL STATEMENTS

First of all, my delegation congratulates you on your election to the Chair. As our opening general statement, we have these comments:

(i) There have been discussion on the proposal for an Indigenous representative to be a Co-Chair on the Working Group. As it is an inter-sessional ad hoc Working Group, might we have a report on the proposal for an Indigenous Co-Chair? ...and the rationale for such a decision?

(ii) The second comment is one of a complaint, perhaps just from frustration, but something needs to be done to improve the registration process for these Indigenous meetings. There are many more delegates still in the line up for registration; we could have started earlier and many of them are still not here as they are waiting outside to register.

(iii) Our major intervention at this time, however, is to comment on the establishment of a Permanent Forum. Mr. Chairman, you heard from the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights in his Opening Statement refer to the Vienna Conference paragraph 22 and the 1995 Sub-Commission resolution that a Permanent Forum be established in the early part of the Indigenous Decade. We would respectfully urge you and through you, Mr. Chairman, to set aside any notion of a "possible" establishment or a "question" of the Permanent Forum. We would recommend instead, in light of previous resolutions, on the establishment of a Permanent Forum that this assembly consider: since the International Decade has to have a mid-term review, an announcement during the review that there will be a Permanent Forum established within the U.N. System. This would be a good positive statement and would signal an advancement during the first half of the Decade. Thank you.

W. Littlechild QC
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