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Agenda Item 4 (f): EDUCATION

COLLECTIVE INTERVENTION
BY THE INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S CAUCUS

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Mr. Chairperson, members of the Permanent Forum, distinguished Government Representatives, my fellow indigenous brothers and sisters,
ENGAI ITHOO IYOOK ENGOITOI: God Give Us a Way Forward.

My name is Ndinini Kimesera. I am a member of the Maasai Peoples from Tanzania. I am a representative of the Maasai Women Development Organization and I am here today to speak on the Agenda item on Education on behalf of the Indigenous Women's Caucus, which includes Indigenous Women from the regions of Africa, Asia, Europe, Circumpolar Regions, North America, South America and the Pacific.

We, the Indigenous Women of the world, call for the immediate adoption of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which has been languishing these past ten years. Since we Indigenous Women are still being denied the most basic human right, that of education, and are suffering the most abject poverty because of lack of education, we call for the United Nations to extend the Decade of Indigenous Peoples for another 10 years, in order that the work may be accomplished.

We recommend that the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues request that UNESCO, UNDP, UNITAR, UNICEF, the World Bank and the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education support the following critical educational needs:

- 1) Access to Free education for Indigenous Women, from preschool to adult education with a special emphasis on literacy.
- 2) Equal treatment and resources given to Indigenous Women for the study and promotion of Indigenous Languages, many of which are currently under extreme distress and close to extinction.
- 3) Financial support for Indigenous Women to establish schools in Indigenous Language Immersion or bilingual mediums.
- 4) Financial support for Indigenous Women to develop culturally appropriate curriculum to be taught in all schools.
- 5) Programs that make Indigenous Women aware of benefits of educational institutions, and promote capacity building through grants and other financial support.

Furthermore, Indigenous women must be involved in all phases of education, from the designation of resources building infrastructure, from the training of indigenous teachers to the development of culturally appropriate curriculum, and from the graduation from university to the teaching of students.

We ask that the United Nations Agencies strengthen their liaisons with universities and institutions of Indigenous learning in order to support the mainstreaming of Indigenous Women's issues in academic curriculum, and to promote the examination and documentation of the role of Indigenous Women

serving as custodians of sacred knowledge and traditional medicine, as educators, healers, ritual specialists and as artisans.

We ask that the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues designate the newly formed Indigenous Educator's Caucus (IEC) to serve as the focal point of the PFII to accomplish this work. All of the above work is guaranteed by Articles 12 -17 of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and again we call for its immediate adoption.

We thank you Mr. Chairman for hearing the voices of the Indigenous Women's Caucus.

[Written by Lilikala Kame'elihiwa, Ph.D and other members of the Indigenous Women's Caucus Subcommittee on Education]