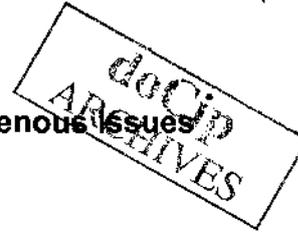


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(Item 4f)

Third Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
New York, 10 - 21 May, 2004



Agenda Item 4(f) – Education
Statement by the Asia Caucus

Mr. Chairperson, this statement is made on behalf of the Asia caucus. Many of the problems we face are common to us all, militarisation and conflict, loss of indigenous languages and high drop out rate (especially for girls).

We urge the Permanent Forum to make the following recommendations:

1. To request States, UNICEF, UNESCO and other relevant UN agencies and bodies to recognise and support the establishment of autonomous Indigenous Peoples' Education Councils to ensure the involvement of indigenous peoples in all processes from planning, implementation and evaluation, to promote the development of indigenous education systems.
2. That adequate support be provided to indigenous peoples in the development of culturally appropriate education and based on the use of indigenous language (mother tongues), that promotes the cultural potential of both sexes along with mutual respect between sexes. By appropriate education, we mean that the education curriculum should reflect our language, culture, knowledge and values from our perspectives.
3. That equal access to appropriate and quality education for all, including refugees, internal and external displaced indigenous peoples. In the case of indigenous peoples in countries suffering from armed conflict, such as Burma and Nepal, it is important to ensure that education continues without interruption, declaring schools as Peace Zones, and to ensure the inclusion and retention of indigenous children.
4. To request member states to report to the Permanent Forum on their expenditure for the military, education and indigenous education.
5. As Indigenous Peoples' knowledge provides guidelines for sustainable and harmonious living with nature, we request States and relevant international bodies and agencies to support the maintenance of indigenous knowledge and to formulate policies that would include indigenous knowledge in formal education curriculum.
6. To request States and relevant international bodies and agencies to promote recognition of the roles of indigenous elders, particularly women in the intergenerational transmission of knowledge.
7. We reiterate the recommendations of the second session of the Permanent Forum on education (articles 106, 107, 109, 110, 112, and 113), with the amendment of article 106 and 111 with reference to "bilingual" education, to be replaced by "multilingual" education.

- [REDACTED]
8. We also urge States to adopt the UN draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as it contains many safeguards on education for indigenous peoples.

We are part of the world's global family, as stated in the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, 'all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilisations and which constitute the common heritage of human kind'. Education is key to development. Our education is essential for the development and equal participation of indigenous people, and women as a whole.

Thank you.