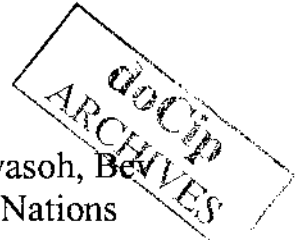


12105

4F



Ske:noh Swagwegoh. Nye gya soh, Go we gyu she, Honyo'oh Nygyasoh, Be Jacobs. I am here on behalf of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Six Nations Grand River Community.

In a meeting with our clanmothers, faithkeepers and women in my community, we discussed the issue of education for our children. One of the points ~~they made was~~ ~~that~~ they wanted me to bring to this forum was that we do not distinguish between education, health, human rights, environment, culture, etc. because all of these issues are incaptulated within our beliefs, culture, language and laws. The language determines our identity, who we are and how we are connected to the land. The language assists us in understanding our environment and is our only way of knowing the deep understanding of our identity. Our languages are used in all of our ceremonies and medicine and healing societies.

One of the issues of concern was the fact that our languages are becoming extinct. Our elders who are the language speakers and cultural holders are dying. Many of our people have lost their ability to speak the languages fluently.

The loss of our languages are also the result of the impact of colonization and genocide. Many generations of children were forced through Eurocentric Canadian and American laws to attend residential schools, which forced them to learn a foreign language and a foreign religion. It perpetuated many types of abuses in these schools, including spiritual abuse, mental abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and any other type of abuse that exists. As a result many generations of our people lost their languages.

The United States and Canada, along with the many denominations of churches allowed this type of genocide to happen. It is now time for them to accept responsibility and to support our peoples' insistence that we have our own educational system that allows our Elders and traditional teachers to teach our children their language, their laws, their identity.

In our traditional educational system, our grandmothers, mothers and aunts were our teachers. Our teachings also told us that we could send out only a few of our peoples to learn the "white man's education" so that they can come back and help our people. However, as a result of colonization and genocide, our traditional educational system has been eroded by a foreign paternalistic educational system. We still have our grandmothers, mothers and aunts who can teach our children their proper education and we will do it whether we have the support of Canada or the United States.

The history of our peoples are also not included in the current educational systems in Canada and the United States. As a result of this history not being included, stereotypes and racist attitudes towards our people continues and is alive in well in ~~our~~ ^{today's} society. Changes in the educational systems in Canada and the United States are paramount at this time.

We recommend that the Permanent Forum encourage all UN agencies whose activities have an impact on education and language provide the necessary resources to revitalize our languages, including language programs and curriculum development.