

**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 10th Session
May 16th to May 27th, 2011
UN Headquarters, New York, NY
North American Indigenous Peoples Caucus Statement
Agenda Item 8: Special Rapporteur's study on the status of
implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord of 1997**

**Presented by Celeste McKay, International Indigenous Women's Forum
(FIMI) North America
May 25, 2011**

Good morning. As this is the first time I take the floor, I congratulate the Chair and new Members of the Permanent Forum for their appointment.

The North America Indigenous Peoples Caucus at the 10th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues expresses our firm support for the following summarized statement presented by Chief Wilton Littlechild, International Chief for Treaty 6, 7 and 8, at the Chittagong Hill Tracts "Implementation of the 1997 Peace Accord" demonstration held yesterday, Tuesday May 23rd 2011, at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza in New York.

We read this statement into the record of the discussion of the Permanent Forum under this agenda item as the collective statement of the North America region at this session, as follows: _____

Warm Greetings, Tansi Nitotaymtik.

I am here as a representative of the Nations of Treaty 6, 7 and 8 Territory in what is now known as Canada to express our solidarity and support for our brothers and sisters, the Indigenous Peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. We began our work at the United Nations in the 1970's with instructions given by our elders to seek recognition and respect for the Treaties made between our Nations and the British Crown.

They told us to carry this work forward based on the following 4 principles:

- ***Inherent Right to Self-determination and Cree government (Kikpaktinkosowin).***
- ***Original spirit and intent of Treaty, Treaties as sacred agreements (Ketchi Oyichikaywina).***
- ***Mutual consent (Taipyimowin)***
- ***Peaceful coexistence and mutual responsibility to honor the international Treaties (Wetaskiwin)***

“For as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the rivers flow”.

We have carried this work forward in the international arena since that time, based on these instructions from our elders which are now reflected in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples among other achievements. Along the way, we learned that there were Indigenous Peoples and Nations from other regions that shared our history, aspirations and perspectives as Treaty Nations. We learned, for example, that the Treaty concluded between the Chakma King and the British Crown represented by the British East Indian Company in 1787 predates our Treaty, Treaty 6, which was concluded in 1876.

We also fully support the call of the Jumma Peoples for the full implementation of the Chittagong Hills Tracts Accord of 1997, in particular regarding de-militarization of their homelands, addressing impunity for human rights violations, halting violence and human rights violations against Indigenous women, and resolution of land disputes including the establishment of an effective mechanism for redress developed and implemented with the full participation of the Indigenous Peoples. This would include the return of lands.

We call upon the Permanent Forum to recognize and support the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on the status of implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord of 1997 which was presented here this morning, and call upon the States in question, in particular to fully implement this accord in keeping with the Preambular paragraphs and Article 37 of the UN Declaration, which address Treaties and Treaty relations.

I was very honored to stand with the Jumma people today in solidarity as we call upon the United Nations to recognize this long struggle and to support the vision and aspirations for respect, recognition and implementation.

We will continue to stand together as Treaty Nations.

Hai Hai. (Thank you.)