



UNPFII Seventh Session - Thursday, 24th of April 2008 - Topic: CULTURE

I dearly greet all the people in this room and those who will know these words later by other means. In the understanding of the Maya, those who move to a new awareness in these times are people of the fifth mankind, that is the new era the Maya prophets predicted 500 years ago. That means that it is possible to cope with climate change and successfully integrate the knowledge of the indigenous peoples in world politics.

It is most important to keep the image of a safe and beautiful world present in our minds. It is part of the Maya culture and its education to maintain mental and emotional balance even if things seem to be dangerous or out of control. This knowledge is encrypted in the monuments of the Mayas. This is why these monuments are known in the whole of the world and why Hundreds and Thousands of visitors have travelled to this cultural heritage: these places breathe the spirit of the Mayas which contains healing powers, for humans and the whole planet Earth.

I will describe three situations where the rights of the Mayas today are still violated and I will propose concrete actions:

FIRST, Maya elders and sages are prevented from access to the archaeological sites built by their ancestors when they want to practice rituals or even only blow a shell to communicate with the forces of nature and extraterrestrial beings. For example, the government of Yucatan prohibited a sacred ceremony on the occasion of the spring equinox in Chichen Itza, arguing that the use of candles could provoke a fire. On the other hand, the government invited modern pop musicians to the same ruins for commercial events with the objective to attract more visitors paying entrance fees, laying out hundreds of meters of electric cables. The Mayas themselves until now do not receive the enormous benefits generated by their cultural heritage. And now, they are even expelled from the archaeological sites. This is a violation of their human on freedom of religion.

I ASK the United Nations to intervene here, to urge the Mexican government to respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially Article 2 and 18. The representative of the UN in Mexico City has to be informed to take immediate action, above all in the state of Yucatan. UNESCO is asked to promote the use of archaeological sites for traditional Maya ceremonies, the more so since some of these sites have been declared World Cultural Heritage.

SECOND, since many years we encounter the situation that cultural heritage of the Mayas in the form of documents is located in foreign countries. This is the case for so-called codices in glyph letters and for some books containing prophecies like the famous "Book of Chilam Balam from Chumayel". These documents are important pieces of identity, as well as sources of income when exposed and explained. They have to be given back to the Mayas.

I ASK the United Nations to back this claim mostly against the United States, Mexico, Spain, France and Germany. It is a moral debt of these countries to share their knowledge with the Mayas and to provide the means in order to protect the documents in the future. UNESCO is asked to facilitate the inclusion of the Maya documents in the list of World Document Heritage.

THIRD, the borders of Maya culture do not match with the political borders of the nation states, dividing the traditional Maya land into Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador. Mayas are still united: in their culture, in their language and in their cosmovision. These factors are the main reference for their identity, citizenship of the existing nation states is not. The lack of recognition of the Maya identity and the privation from power, welfare and freedom of speech provoke major social problems, such as alcoholism. The remedy for dependence is independence. World politics will have to take this reality into account.

I ASK the United Nations to implement the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples literally. Referring to article 9, this means recognizing the Maya leaders and establish permanent contact with them on a governmental level, recognizing the Maya flag and the Maya passport. Referring to Article 26, this means giving the Mayas the right to administrate the natural resources on their traditional land, above all the oil reserves in the states of Campeche, Tabasco and Yucatan. UNESCO is asked to give considerable funds and to help establish a legal framework for an independent media in the Maya language and its dialects providing impartial information about indigenous issues without fear.

I want to stress that all these measures are not concessions, but necessary readjustments of the historical injustice and genocide suffered by the Maya people 500 years ago. It is intolerable that political corruption and drug trafficking on a large scale are still going on in their land, these circumstances are extremely alien to Maya culture and spiritual pureness. The Maya kingdom has never ceased to exist, it has just ceased to be recognized. This is changing right now. The healing process is in place, both for the Mayas and the profiteers of their cultural heritage. This process will lead to beneficial mutuality.

LET ME CLOSE by thanking you warmly for your attention and the freedom of speech accorded to me here in a safe setting on international territory where differences are joyfully celebrated instead of being used to exclude.