

UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENEOUS ISSUES  
FOURTH SESSION  
NEW YORK, MAY, 2005

Item: Universal Primary Education – MDG #2

Presenter: Kai'ōpua Fyfe

Collective Statement:

Na Koa Ikaika o Ka Lahui Hawaii  
Indigenous World Association  
Koani Foundation  
Waikiki Hawaiian Civic Clubs  
And others

Kamakakūokalani Center  
for Hawaiian Studies  
Ka Lahui Hawaii

Recommendations:

1. That the UNPFII create a tracking and follow-up procedure to monitor the implementation of recommendations made in its own reports, relating to youth and education, those made by the Expert Seminar on Indigenous Peoples and Education E/CN./2005/88/Add.4 and those made by the Special Rapportuer E/CH.4/2005/88. We support and endorse these recommendations and want to see them implemented.
2. That the UNPFII work with UNDP, the lead agency on the MDGs and the Special Rapporteurs on Education and Indigenous Peoples and the IASG, to establish benchmarks and a workable timetable for agencies and specialized bodies to identify priority recommendations relating to MDG#2 in order that the Forum be able to advise ECO-SOC on progress being made by the UN system and States relating to MDGs, especially MDG#2.
3. That the UNPFII initiate an effort to bring indigenous peoples with technology background to the WSIS in Tunisia and that the Forum send an expert to the session. We recommend that the Forum specifically support the Pacific Voices initiative relating to educational tech applications in mother tongue languages which was featured at the first Global Forum on Indigenous Peoples ion the in the Information Society – sponsored by the UNPFII.
4. We recommend that the UNPFII through its secretariat, initiate a consultation with UNESCO, and indigenous peoples and educators for the purpose of drafting a policy for UNESCO to ensure that recommendations directed to UNESCO will e implemented through an appropriate process which involves consultation with indigenous peoples for community based primary education. If UNESCO shall fail to adopt a policy in 2005, we recommend the UNPFII work with indigenous peoples to draft a model polity and forward it to the

ECO-SOC in 2006 with a request that the ECO-SOC direct UNESCO and all other agencies without policies on indigenous peoples to adopt the draft policy in 2006.

**Intervention:**

We are fortunate that there has been a significant focus on the education of indigenous peoples and children in prior years. We refer to the Expert Seminar on Indigenous Peoples and Education, Oct. 2004, involving UNESCO and the High Commissioner's Office, and to the Report of the Special Rapporteur, Rudolfo Stavenhagan, see the recommendations in E/CN.4/2005/88/Add.4 and E/CN.4/2005/88. We support these recommendations and want to see them implemented. We believe that the recommendations which address specifically MDG#2 Achieving Universal Primary Education should be prioritized in order to meet this important Millennium Goal.

The Forum has also informed itself about the significance of mother-tongue education. At its Third Session the Forum invited Dr. Tove Skutnabb Kangas to present her research on the impact of native language education on indigenous children. This session two expert papers have been produced to further education this topic. Data gathered from all regions indicates that indigenous children, educated in mother tongue have better success rates, grades and comprehension than those who are not. This data also indicate that children educated in other tongue are better adjusted in their adult life.

In 2004, the Forum hosted the Global Forum for Indigenous Peoples in the Information Society. This was an official parallel event to the first WSIS in Geneva. During the Global Forum delegates and the UNPFII learned about the significant progress made in applications of communications technology for mother tongue education for indigenous children in the Pacific. This program, initiated by the Pacific Voices project can be replicated globally and should be show cased at the second WSIS in Tunis. We recommend that the UNPFII pursue this and also undertake a strategy to ensure that the recommendations of first Global Forum be included in the Final Report of the Second WSIS in Tunis. For this reason we recommend that the UNPFII experts on education and youth attend the WSIS session and the Prepcoms. We know that technology can be a powerful tool for education and that mother tongue education is the best medium for indigenous children. It's time to put them together at the second WSIS.

Finally, UNESCO has significant responsibilities regarding education and culture. UNESCO has no policy on indigenous peoples and consequently we believe, is incapable of implementing recommendations for this body, the Expert Seminar and the Special Rapporteurs relating to community based education of indigenous children or collective partnerships with parents, educators and others. It is for this reason that we recommend the UNPFII undertake a collective effort with indigenous

peoples to draft a model policy and forward it to the ECO-SOC for implementation in 2006.

We also support the recommendations contained in the Second Pacific UNPFII consultation Report relating to prototype Pacific educational models, curricula relating to decolonization, culturally appropriate sex education and employment education for the dislocated.