

**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Intervention  
– Climate Change**

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**14th SESSION**

New York 20 April-1 May 2015

**ITEM 4:** Half-day discussion on the Pacific region.

**Delivered by:** Sandra Creamer

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Mr Chair,

Our host Indigenous Peoples of these lands, honorable indigenous brothers and sisters, Permanent Forum members, and other delegates to the Permanent Forum,

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Pacific recommends:

**COP21 on Climate Change<sup>1</sup>**

1. *That State participants* to this conference ensure that:

- a. Indigenous peoples are actively enabled to effectively participate in this year's COP21 conference in Paris, including:
  - i. *meaningful opportunities* for indigenous peoples to engage with states and prepare comprehensively for the conference; and
  - ii. *recognition* of indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge relating to the causes of climate change, and mitigation and adaptation action moving forward;
- b. The agreement from this conference includes action-oriented commitments for:
  - i. *Protection* of the world's most vulnerable citizens' rights (particularly indigenous children, elderly, disabled and women);
  - ii. *Meaningful and comprehensive transformation* of economic operating systems and economic policy 'levers' to ensure finance is allocated more to Life-nurturing activities (rather than Life-destroying ones);<sup>2</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> See website, <http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en>.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. see extensive publications and talks by Naomi Klein (e.g. "This changes everything with Owen Jones", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhJA7HCPHDA>), Noam Chomsky (e.g. "How to ruin an economy",

- c. Indigenous Peoples to receive a fair allocation of funding for climate change related actions and initiatives.

## Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

2. That States, with the support of responsible UN Agencies and with the meaningful participation of the affected indigenous peoples and National Human Rights institutions, design and urgently implement comprehensive national climate change mitigation and adaptation plans. Such plans must include:
  - a. A timely transition to and scaling up of renewable energy production, infrastructure and affordable technology;
  - b. Implementation of a true wellbeing index (as opposed to the Gross Domestic Product) as tool and indicator to drive and influence national policy and legislation<sup>3</sup>;
  - c. Systems and opportunities for citizens to contribute value to society and receive fair value in return (whether in voluntary or paid employment); and
  - d. Development and implementation of national health response strategies.

## Culture

3. That, in recognizing the threat of forced mass migration of indigenous Pacific peoples from their traditional lands and territories due to climate change:
  - a. States and indigenous Pacific peoples (both those directly affected, and those in the 'receiving' countries), with the support of their respective national human rights institutions, develop a Pacific climate change migration response strategy. Particular attention should be given to matters of post-migration 'nationhood' and protection of the culture of migrating indigenous peoples; and

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mhi-i0z-fk>), Chris Hedges (e.g. "The pathology of the rich", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6unS2JF8TA>), Henry Giroux (e.g. "Zombie politics", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFP-7UUNI>), Elizabeth Warren (e.g. "Fighting back against Wall Street Giants", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfW97SORuxO>), Edgar Cahn (e.g. "Building the Core Economy", at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4deABsB3TBU>) and more.

<sup>3</sup> See for example, New Zealand Treasury, "Working Towards Higher Living Standards for New Zealanders" (May 2011), p28: downloadable from <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/research-policy/tp/higherlivingstandards>.

- b. In the spirit of Pacific brotherhood, *indigenous peoples* ourselves *consider* what lands under our authority may be offered to indigenous peoples experiencing forced migration due to climate change.

MR CHAIR,

4. The Pacific Caucus makes these recommendations:

- a. *As we accept* categorically that climate change is the single biggest threat of unprecedented proportions ever to face the survival of humankind on Planet Earth;
- b. *As we understand* that the human suffering and destruction of nature associated with climate change will be exponentially exacerbated by an extensive and varied web of interconnected socioeconomic, environmental and meteorological systems - and that even with our best scientific minds and forecast modeling about the interplay between these systems, our future (and more importantly the future of generations to come) is growing ever more uncertain;
- c. *Being deeply distressed* that we are currently undergoing the sixth mass extinction of life on Earth<sup>4</sup> aggravated undeniably by human activities, including the grave danger to our Pacific region's biodiversity due to the known threats of increasing sea temperatures, ocean acidification and other environmental changes detrimental to marine life;
- d. *Appreciating* that climate change right now is having, and will continue to have, profound effects for our Pacific Indigenous Peoples - particularly our small island states and coastal communities whose very existence is in jeopardy due to rising ocean levels, biodiversity destruction, and severe weather events; and
- e. *Strongly urging* all states, UN agencies, business and industry, civil society and indigenous peoples ourselves, to take much needed bold, decisive, timely and ETHICAL action in response to climate change and to achieve climate justice.

Thank you Mr Chair.

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<sup>4</sup> See "The Sixth Great Extinction Is Underway—and We're to Blame" (Time Magazine, 25 July 2014) at <http://time.com/3035872/sixth-great-extinction/>.