

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples Issues – New York, May 2003

Agenda item: “Future Work of the Permanent Forum”

Tansi (Good Afternoon) Mr. Chairperson, Indigenous nations, states and all participants of the second session of the Permanent Forum. I would like to honor the Haudenosaunee nation in whose territory in which we are guests upon today.

I am reading this collective statement on behalf of Ginger Gosnell (youth representative) Assembly of First Nations, as well as the Saulteau First Nations, the Tono oothan Nation, Nippissing First Nations and the Pimicikaman Cree Nation.

Recommending that under the agenda item of “Future Work” that the Permanent Forum insists that the Federal Government of Canada accept responsibility for the history of colonization imposed upon the Indigenous nations.

The Indigenous narrative and the history of colonialism must be taught in replacement of or in addition to the current secondary and post secondary euro centric curriculum. Indigenous curriculum must be developed by Indigenous peoples and address our experience of colonization.

The Federal Government of Canada and our contemporary education system perpetuate the injustices experienced by First Nations young persons in the process of colonization. The status quo narrative, historically biased which remains in the hands of the dominant society, continues to reinforce a derogatory “telling” of First Nations people. Canada’s role in the annihilation and continued assimilations practices inflicted upon First Nations peoples remains ignored.

Until the Canadian population of young people, including First Nations youth are given the opportunity to learn the truth of Canada’s role in First Nations history - reconciliation, health, justice, and all things “democratic” can never be achieved for future generations.

In order to achieve equality for First Nations youth, awareness and education about the impacts of colonialism must be taught. *Sharing the true history of colonization must be a priority of the Canadian government; the aim of this exercise would be to ensure that Canada’s colonialist policies are understood from a First Nations perspective and never again duplicated.*

The future work of the Permanent Forum must include a call to the states whom are signatories to article 29 of the Convention on the rights of the Child that requires states to, “...agree that the education of the child be directed to: the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origins.”

The Permanent Forum must ask states to ensure that their domestic legislation is compatible with this article to ensure that appropriate cultural awareness and Indigenous education is available for all Canadians in order to promote harmony between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within the state and in accordance with this international covenant.

Thank you for allowing me to present this brief statement on the future work of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. *Nanaskomon!*