

Intervention to the Tenth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2011

Global Indigenous Youth Caucus Statement - May 19, 2011

Agenda Item 4b: Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous peoples and other United Nations human rights mechanisms

Thank you Madam Chair.

The Global Indigenous Youth Caucus would like to once again remind the Permanent Forum and all present, that Indigenous youth compose the "majority" of our communities - yet we remain under represented and poorly supported in this Forum. We would also like to remind you that we have been repeating our issues and concerns for many years, with little to no implementation.

We, the Indigenous youth representatives that are present here today, are not only speaking for ourselves and our issues - we are speaking on behalf of our younger brothers and sisters, nieces, nephews, and children of our own. We recognize the strong will and noble ability of the Global Indigenous Youth who have the privilege of being present and acknowledge those who are not present here, who are working, surviving and advocating for the fulfillment of our rights as Indigenous peoples.

The Global Indigenous Youth Caucus recommends the following:

1. We urge the Special Rapporteur to investigate development aggression toward, migration of and the forced and coerced removal of Indigenous children and youth from their families and communities to fulfill their basic human rights - such as education, employment, health care and personal safety - as well as for the purposes of gaining access to Indigenous lands and resources. We ask that when calls for information are requested - information specifically pertaining to youth are submitted.
2. We request a specific report about Indigenous youth and identity, specifically, how the lack of identity including factors such as land, education, Indigenous religion and spiritual practices, gender, and social structures, is often the root cause of violence towards them. Simply because of our Indigeneity, youth experience discrimination of all forms, at varying levels. Whether it is States not recognizing our rights as peoples, or the rates of poverty - until our basic needs are met, any human rights discourse is irrelevant. We ask that this report compare the situation of youth globally to the issues affecting Indigenous youth.
3. We once again urge the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to look into the study on indigenous youth's participation in decision-making prepared and presented by the Indigenous Youth Caucus in its 3rd session, and to include a section especially addressing the role and the good practice of indigenous youth's participation in decision-making in its final

report on Indigenous Peoples' right to participation. We further request the Expert Mechanism to include paragraphs addressing indigenous youth in its future studies.

4. We urge the permanent forum to collaborate with the UN Commission on the Rights of the Child and Member state reporting processes and other UN organizations with the mandate for children so that youth specific mandates are complied with.

5. We recommend the Expert Mechanism, the Permanent Forum, and the Special Rapporteur to encourage Indigenous peoples and their organizations in organizing for the collection of their own population data. Basic and accurate Indigenous population data within States is currently unavailable or inaccurate. This impedes the ability for Indigenous peoples to accurately forecast their populations and make plans for education, child care, and health care needs.

State measures are not adequate as they have a vested interest in reducing our numbers, both within data collection and in reality. This information is vital to advocate for the means of Indigenous peoples to govern themselves and fully participate in negotiation and other decision making processes. Any data collection processes must be conducted in conjunction with Indigenous peoples and their respective organizations.

6. We recommend that the Expert mechanism to request information to States on Indigenous youth engagement so that they report on these efforts and both their prevalence and efficacy. While some states may not be directly blocking the realization of rights - funding and resources are not made available, particularly for Indigenous youth. If it is true that States, our leadership and representative organizations believe that youth are a priority, then our presence must be a priority and therefore funding our participation must also be a priority. Currently, the youth specific mandate of the Permanent Forum and the Special Rapporteur is not being met. In the future, we would like to see the Special Rapporteur fully embrace his mandate to consider Indigenous children and youth issues.

Thank you madam chair.

Krysta Williams