

Reserved by Mr. Kent Lebeck

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The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fourth Session
Agenda Item 4c

The Situation and Concerns of Indigenous children

The UN PFII Indigenous Caucus Committee on Indigenous Children

Respected Chairperson, members of the Permanent Forum, sisters and brothers

Over the last 3 sessions of the Permanent Forum, at the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, at various meetings including the General Discussion Day 2003 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the absence of a comprehensive study including a baseline on the situation of indigenous children at the global level has been remarked by UN and other international agencies, these and other UN bodies and mechanisms and by Indigenous Peoples organizations and civil society representatives.

Regrettably, perhaps due to the high demands of expertise and other resources that such a study would demand, and the equally high pressures and demands levied on the UN and its agencies and systems, it has so far not been possible for either this illustrious body or any of its subsidiaries to undertake or commit to such an exercise. However the urgent need for such a study is evident and universally acknowledged.

Therefore, Indigenous Peoples representatives, with the support of non-government organizations engaged in children's rights have initiated a modest process towards compiling and investigating information on this critical issue for the survival and development of our peoples. We have, towards this end requested support, including financial support from various government and other development agencies including UN agencies, but would like to assure the respected members of this Forum that we, the Indigenous Peoples representatives at this Forum are committed to executing this work regardless of the prioritization and support accorded by other entities to contribute towards it.

We assure this august body and other UN bodies and agencies whose mandate is connected in any way with this issue that we will present regular reports and updates on the process and progress of this work, in anticipation of the indulgence of these entities to closely monitor and engage with it, to offer guidance and supervision and to eventually and in due course to move for its recognition as an official document of the UN.

We also request the Permanent Forum in the light of this initiative and the review of the MDGs, and of course its own main theme this year, to request the inter-agency group to organize and support with adequate and appropriate

participation of indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Children a workshop on the concerns of health and basic education and a seminar on the impact of endemic and structural violence against indigenous children to contribute towards the 5 years review of the MDGs and to the Secretary General's Study on violence against children respectively.