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Statement by the Indigenous Education Caucus
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Indigenous Peoples traditional education systems were developed over thousands of generations. Through observation, experience, adaptation and transference of knowledge (within and between communities) Indigenous Education Systems developed to meet the need of Indigenous Peoples in their ancestral lands and territories. Customs, traditions, belief systems, history, language and identity of the individual, family, community, nation and the connectivity to and between them, likewise developed over generations and was tied to the ancestral lands and territories. Indigenous Education was a life long experience through which the individual learned her/his role, responsibilities and obligations as a communal of Indigenous Peoples.

Therefore, the Indigenous Education System developed and was designed to perpetuate the people through its future generations. The Indigenous economic system was derived from the education system previously described and thus existed as a means of providing sustenance for the People, transference of knowledge and innovation of skills and technologies.

Millennium Development Goal 2: "Achieve universal primary education" does not accurately or adequately address the comprehensive, continuum that is or at least was the Indigenous Education System. It is not possible to accurately or adequately address Indigenous education without first acknowledging the damage and destruction wrought by the centuries old war waged against Indigenous Peoples globally. Colonisation of Indigenous lands and territories and the continuum of policies and practices designed to establish and maintain control of these lands and territories have had a devastating effect on Indigenous Peoples, their connection to the land and thus has devastated the Indigenous Education System.

The disproportionate rate of poverty and health disparities of Indigenous Peoples, relative to the dominant society, is directly related to removal from ancestral lands and territories and/or interference with rights and appurtenants with Indigenous Peoples. Thus, alleviation of these conditions must be viewed as a function and benefit of restoring Indigenous Education Systems. Indigenous Peoples view our education as a basic human right.

The banning of Indigenous Language by colonizers and the beating of Indigenous children for speaking the language of their ancestors has resulting in the near extinction of Indigenous Languages worldwide. Therefore, the support of and education in Indigenous Languages is critical to the very survival of Indigenous cultures and Indigenous Peoples.

The Indigenous Education Caucus at the 4th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues joins the Indigenous Caucus in recommending to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, that it:

- 1) Declare Indigenous Peoples in a state of emergency arising from constant violations of our universal and collective human rights;
- 2) Provide Indigenous Peoples the evaluation of compliance with the recommendation of the first three sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues;
- 3) Establish, recognize and declare the right to ancestral lands, territories and natural resources of Indigenous Peoples since it is the fundamental base around which Indigenous education systems were developed.

The Indigenous Education Caucus at the 4th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in keeping with the 2nd Millennium Goal, "Achieving universal primary education", recommends to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues that it recommend to the following to ECOSOC:

- 1) That UNDP, as the UN Agency with oversight of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Commission on Human Rights, UNESCO and UNICEF undertake an effort to inform and educate states about the connection between Indigenous Peoples, ancestral lands, territories, ancestral languages, their education systems and recommend immediate adoption of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- 2) That the Inter-Agency Support Group recognise and support Indigenous community initiatives and ownership of education institutions to teach and preserve Indigenous languages, philosophy of life and values.
- 3) That UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNDP and specialised UN Agencies undertake an effort to inform and educate state about the research that has been conducted that demonstrates that Mother tongue immersion at the earliest stages of primary education results in significant academic achievement levels.
- 4) Recognise that Community-based, consultative approach to curriculum development must be given priority to achieve universal primary education in dominant society education systems with Mother tongue immersion as well as Indigenous philosophy centered education systems delivered in traditional Indigenous Languages.
- 5) Urge states to recognise the importance of gender equity in the development and implementation of education programmes.

- 6) Urge states, UNESCO, UNICEF and specialized UN agencies to examine university systems and teacher-training colleges to evaluate and develop curriculum based upon Indigenous philosophies.
- 7) Recognise and support collective ownership of education philosophy
- 8) Support existing Indigenous Education Systems and languages preservation and revitalisation initiatives.
- 9) Support Indigenous experts' research and assessments of community educational needs, data collection, analysis and disaggregation.
- 10) In those sub-regions where there is political stigmatization of Indigenous movements and military occupation continues we urge the UN system and inter-governmental agencies to create mechanisms to promote and protect community-based and controlled Indigenous education.
- 11) Call for states, international and regional financial institutions to create a dedicated fund of \$1 (one U.S. dollar) per year per Indigenous person to support Indigenous experts' research, assessments and the creation and maintenance of Indigenous Education Institutes.