

**Statement by
John M. MISWAGON
Chief, Pimicikamak Cree Nation**

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To: Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
New York, N.Y.
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Tansi, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Permanent Forum, Ladies & Gentlemen,
Indigenous Brothers and Sisters:

My name is John Miswagon, Chief of Pimicikamak – an Indigenous Cree Nation in Northern Manitoba, Canada – Treaty # 5 (1875).

Today we are discussing economic and social development. One of the major issues in economic and social development is the impact of large development projects on Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous lands. In the 1970s the Manitoba government and Manitoba Hydro (in Canada) undertook a massive hydro-electric development project which flooded Pimicikamak lands and violated our treaty and inherent aboriginal rights. This project, which was undertaken without our consent, had a serious impact on our economic and sustenance resources – fish, animals, medicines, water, and transportation. The flooding contaminated, and continues to contaminate, our lands and waters, the habitat for our hunting, trapping and fishing traditions.

Finally, in 1977, after the Hydro project and flooding was well underway, Pimicikamak was able to conclude an agreement (the Northern Flood Agreement) with the governments of Manitoba and Canada, and Manitoba Hydro. This agreement was meant to remediate, mitigate, and compensate for the environmental and social impacts from the hydro projects. Unfortunately, after 30 years, both the Canadian and Manitoba governments, and Manitoba Hydro, have failed to honor this agreement – and the serious damage to our economic and social development continues to exist.

Faced with this serious harm to our lands and people, in the 1990s, Pimicikamak decided to take matters in their own hands and re-establish their traditional Cree government, passing their own laws, and setting up their own economic and social development programs.

We are a sovereign democratic nation exercising our self-determination and self-government in accordance with the U.N. Charter, the International Covenants and our sacred Creator-granted rights, powers and responsibilities.

Consequently, we ask the Permanent Forum, the United Nations and its agencies to do the following:

1. To direct its Member States, including Canada, to respect the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples and to refrain from any development projects on Indigenous territories without the consent of the Indigenous Peoples concerned.
2. To direct Member States, including Canada, to refrain from flooding Indigenous lands and thereby destroying the economic resources and the environment of these Peoples.
3. To direct Member States to honor their treaties and agreements respecting Indigenous Peoples and their lands – and in particular to direct Canada to honor and implement Treaty 5 and the Northern Flood Agreement in recognition of Pimicikamak's rights for the flooding of its lands and other resources essential for its economic and social development.
4. To direct Member States, including Canada, to recognize the right of Indigenous Peoples to determine and control their own economic and social development.

Ekosani, Thank you for your time.
And may God bless each one of us.

John M. Miswagon