

**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

**Sixteenth Session - New York**

**24 April-6 May 2017**

**Agenda Item 5: Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples**

**INTERVENTION DELIVERED BY CATHRYN EATOCK ON BEHALF OF THE  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ORGANISATION OF AUSTRALIA AND THE ABORIGINAL  
RIGHTS COALITION.**

Thank-you Madam Chair, Honourable Members and Indigenous Brothers and Sisters. I am pleased to speak as Chair of the Indigenous Peoples Organisation of Australia. My name is Cathryn Eatock and I am a Kairi and Badtjala women, from central Queensland in Australia.

The Indigenous Peoples Organisation represents 250 members, which includes Indigenous organisations from across Australia. Its members have contributed to these forums since and before its inception. However, the IPO Membership attending these forums have expressed dismay at the reduced capacity for Indigenous input into the revised format of the Forum. These concerns have also been voiced by those attending from across the Pacific region. The consideration of the six mandated areas together with representations only possible once per organisation seriously limits Indigenous peoples voicing of our concerns and the capacity of the Forum to mediate outcomes from appropriate recommendations. Several bodies have expressed reservations about future attendance, given the substantial costs in attending if Indigenous participation is going to be curtailed to such a degree.

Further, the separate session for States and Indigenous peoples doesn't appear to encourage improved communication and dialogue between these group but rather contributes to a further barrier. The IPO recommends that the UNPFII facilitate improved engagement between States and Indigenous peoples rather than contributing to perceived divisions. Perhaps a session requesting a report back by States and Indigenous peoples on what they had jointly addressed may lead to more constructive outcomes for Indigenous peoples and states a like. Such an approach may encourage states to seek advice from the Permant Forum on how to address particular issues of concern, such as the development of a National Implementation Plan.

The IPO is also concerned regarding the impending cut-off date for Indigenous organisations to be lodged as ECOSOC members. We have a number of large

representative organisations who are not ECOSOC members, including the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, our national representative body so we are concerned that there is significant pressure to address this. These governance processes can take some time to finalize.

Thank you, Madam Chair