

**Intervention to the Tenth Session of the
UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2011
Global Indigenous Youth Caucus Statement - May 24, 2011
Agenda Item 7: Half Day Discussion on the Right to Water and Indigenous Peoples**

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Intreabud Ricky Tran

The Global Indigenous Youth Caucus raises our voices in solidarity to speak for the protection of the sacredness of water through the recognition and application of our traditional cultural and spiritual values to water. We reiterate that water is essential to life, and is crucial for bio-cultural diversity and for sustaining all aspects of Indigenous people survival and well being.

Water is a human right, a right of all nature, and is everyone's responsibility. Water is also necessary for health. Unsafe water and inadequate sanitation contribute greatly to child mortality, especially vulnerable populations such as the Indigenous communities.

As recommended in the final report of the Forum's 6th session, we extend our support for the Indigenous World Forum on Water and Peace to be organized with the participation of indigenous youth.

Article 31 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right to clean and accessible water, adequate for the health and well-being of the individual and family, and no one shall be deprived of such access or quality of water due to individual economic circumstance."

However, UN Water Research observes that there are 884 millions of people lacking access to safe drinking water. Indigenous youth and children in sub-Sahara and other rural areas in Africa are suffering from water borne illness due to acute shortage of clean and sufficient water. The diversion of water has resulted in terracide and aquacide, which leaves our people deeply entrenched in poverty. Consequently, this kills and sickens thousands of our Indigenous children and youth every day.

The Global Indigenous Youth Caucus therefore submits the following recommendations with urgency:

1. We recommend the Forum, in cooperation with WHO, UNDP, UNEP and UNICEF, to allocate additional funds to educate and promote safe hygiene practices to our Indigenous children and youth. Furthermore, a high-level expert meeting with UNICEF, Special Rapporteur on Water should be organized to explore and establish indicators of water well-being and education for Indigenous children and youth.
2. We recommend mechanisms to be developed that would hold the World Bank legally and financially accountable when granting loans to States to construct large dams, trans-boundary diversion projects, mineral extraction energy production, and even bottled water. These activities have been exploiting the sacred elements of water and contribute to the displacement of Indigenous communities.

3. We urge the Forum to recommend to the ECOSOC, in coordination with UNEP, Special Rapporteur on Water and other UN bodies whose mandate relates to water, as well as indigenous organizations and experts to conduct a UN expert meeting on water allocation, regulation, and access policies that affect the rights of Indigenous Peoples with participation of indigenous youth
4. We urge the Forum to appoint a special rapporteur to conduct a study to examine how the policies of UN members, UN bodies and corporations related to Water implement articles of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
5. We urge the Forum to appoint a special rapporteur to conduct a study on the privatization of water by the Multinational Corporations, the impact of such behavior, and the possible proposals for the return of the right to water, and if this is not possible, the remedies to Indigenous communities.
6. We request the Forum to recommend the States that have abstained from the resolution on the right to water and sanitation to reconsider their position and recognize water as a human right.
7. We support the recommendation made by the Global Indigenous Peoples Caucus to request the Forum to set up a theme on Water with collaboration in 2014.
8. We call on the Forum to take leadership in working with UN bodies, state governments, and indigenous organizations to denounce repressive actions including the use of national militaries and corporate private armies employed to prevent Indigenous Peoples' access to traditional water sources for potability, agriculture, fishing, transport, and ceremonies.

To conclude this statement, the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus strongly emphasizes that Free, Prior and Informed Consent of the Indigenous Peoples shall be sought before any water-related policy, project, program and activity is conducted on Indigenous territories.

Thank you, Madam Chair.