

Statement by Ghazali Ohorella

Pacific Indigenous Caucus

Fourteenth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Agenda item 8: Future work of the Permanent Forum

April 29, 2014, New York City (USA)

Madam Chair, Distinguished members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Representatives of Indigenous Peoples and Member States, Ladies and gentlemen,

The Pacific caucus requests to take the floor under this agenda item to highlight a concern [on Indigenous Peoples and their participation in democratic societies] and to support the statement presented by Dewan Adat Papua under agenda item 7b.

We took note of the remarks made by the representative of Indonesia in response to this statement; however we have a number of concerns.

Madam Chair,

In its statement it was elaborated that through its constitution, Indonesian citizens are equal regardless of ethnicity, that the government respects justice, prosperity including human rights. It was emphasized that the issue of West-Papua will always be resolved within the context of territorial integrity of Indonesia.

This brings us to the essential question; While Indonesia is a signatory to the UN Declaration, and considering that we are mere months after the adoption of the World Conference outcome document, does Indonesia continue to deny that there are Indigenous Peoples living in West-Papua, South-Maluku and other regions?

Regarding territorial integrity we remind Indonesia that per GA resolution 2625 1970 the principle of territorial integrity of a State applies only to those states that conduct themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and thus possess a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or colour.

Madam Chair,

The Pacific caucus is a strong supporter of the Permanent Forum which serves as an important mechanism for Indigenous Peoples to come together and highlight good practices on the ground and to alarm the UN about the challenges they face.

The organization Dewan Adat Papua was compelled to intervene at this session, given the fact that despite numerous attempts from the people of West-Papua to achieve peace and the full enjoyment of their Human Rights, violations of these fundamental rights continue to occur on the ground. Mindful of the current situation, we are keen to know which steps the Indonesian government is going to take to recognize all Indigenous Peoples situated in Indonesia, and which steps to fully implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Madam Chair,

The Pacific caucus is looking forward to further engagement with the Forum, rest assured that the Pacific caucus will continue to monitor the situation in West-Papua, it will remain vigilant and will continue to assist the people of West-Papua in the promotion and protection of their human rights.

Finally, Madam Chair, before I give up the time we want to stress the following,

The Pacific caucus adds its voice to a number of organisations¹ and the GIYC regarding their concern about the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, or SDC's, plans to not renew its support for two essential services: DOCIP² and the Swiss Fund³ for Indigenous Delegates at the United Nations.

The work of these organizations has been taken for granted and mostly unseen, they have proven to facilitate the work of Indigenous Peoples from all around the world at the international level, and have been crucial for Indigenous Peoples to overcome rights issues at the local and national level and to implement changes on the ground. In this process, Switzerland plays a key role.

Terminating the support to the two services which specialize in Indigenous issues in Switzerland will stop a tangible and effective implementation of Indigenous Peoples' rights – or a discard of more than 35 years of financial and political investments at the international level.

It is crucial for indigenous representatives to be supported by Docip and the Swiss Fund in order to participate effectively at the UN. In order to ensure the crucial services to Indigenous Peoples we recommend the following:

- Continued support to Indigenous Peoples along the line of SDC's own support priorities: "Women"; "Indigenous Peoples" and "Access to Justice";
- Continued financial support of Docip and Swiss Fund based on their expertise in supporting Indigenous Peoples and in implementing SDC's policies regarding Indigenous Peoples;
- Broad involvement of Indigenous organizations and communities in the SDC programs at the local and national level.

Thank you Madam Chair,

¹ Statement supported by Assembly of First Nations, Chirapaq-Centro de Culturas Indigenas del Peru, Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas, Indigenous World Association, International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), Kapaeeng Foundation, MBOSCUDA, Nakoa Ikaiak Kalahui Hawaii, Southwest Native Cultures, the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus, The Sami Council, The Mohawk Language Custodians., the Samson Cree Nation.

² Docip is a Swiss foundation based in Geneva, created on the request of the first Indigenous delegates participating in a Conference in the UN in 1977. Its main objective is to support indigenous peoples in defense of their rights, especially in international institutions, in a neutral and impartial manner and respecting the principle of self-determination. Docip is a service organization, providing only practical and technical services, such as information services, documentation and linguistic support. It never speaks on the behalf of Indigenous Peoples.

³ The Swiss Fund was established in 1996 and has been supported by the SDC since then. Thanks to the assistance provided by the Swiss Fund a large number of indigenous delegates have been able to work towards implementation and defence of their rights at the UN. The Swiss Fund, together with the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples, is currently one of the most important sources of funding for the human rights work done by indigenous delegates at the UN.