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Agenda Item 5 – Human Rights

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April 28, 2008

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Am

PACIFIC CAUCUS STATEMENT

The Pacific Caucus recommends that the General Assembly adopt a detailed resolution encouraging States to implement the Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and setting out some guidelines for the implementation of the Declaration as part of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

The Asia and Pacific Forum, the Commonwealth Family of Nations and the Pacific Forum should endorse the Declaration.

These inter-governmental bodies should also:

- affirm their commitment to the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, and
- encourage their member States to develop working partnerships with the Indigenous Peoples.

The Pacific Caucus calls for immediate efforts from all Pacific States to implement the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, with particular emphasis on the exercise of the right to self-determination.

The Pacific Caucus thanks Professor Rodolfo Stavenhagen for his excellent work as Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Issues and his efforts to ensure the Special Rapporteur position is continued into the future.

We also welcome the appointment of Professor James Anaya to the position of Special Rapporteur, and we invite the Special Rapporteur to visit the Pacific Region and report upon the situation of the right of self-determination for Indigenous Peoples.

We welcome Australia's decision to support the Declaration and recommend that the Government of Australia present a detailed and positive statement to the General Assembly supporting the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We call upon the Government of New Zealand, and other governments of the Pacific Region, to take heed of Australia and also declare their support for the Declaration.

The Pacific Caucus expresses its lack of confidence in Canada as a representative of the CANZUS and Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG) on the Human Rights Council.

The Government of Canada is failing in its responsibilities as a member of the HRC to represent the interests of the Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific Region and to uphold the universality of human rights.

The Pacific Caucus considers Canada fails to meet criteria for objectivity on the HRC, and asks that the European Union and other members of WEOG to only support nominations to the Human Rights Council from those States supporting the Declaration.

The Pacific Caucus calls for financial contributions from States - and we acknowledge and thank Australia for its continuing contributions - to assist Indigenous Peoples' representatives from the Pacific Region to attend relevant international meetings and forums.

Most particularly we ask that France provide funds to ensure that the French language and Francophones of the Pacific Region are integrated into the meetings of the Pacific Caucus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommends

- that the General Assembly adopt a detailed resolution
 - to encourage States to implement the Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and
 - to provide guidelines for the implementation of the Declaration as part of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples;
 - the Asia and Pacific Forum, the Commonwealth Family of Nations and the Pacific Forum endorse the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

- the Special Rapporteur visit the Pacific Region and report upon the situation of the right of self-determination for Indigenous Peoples;
- the Government of Australia present a detailed and positive statement to the General Assembly supporting the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- the Government of New Zealand support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- the European Union and other members of WEOG to only support nominations to the Human Rights Council from States supporting the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- States provide financial contributions to assist representatives from the Pacific Region to attend relevant international meetings and forums;
- the Government of France provide financial assistance to ensure that the French language and Francophones of the Pacific Region are integrated into Indigenous Peoples meetings of the Pacific Region