

Rapa Nui, March 28th, 2003.

Ms. Mililani B. Trask  
Indigenous Expert-Pacific Basin  
U.N. Permanent Forum Indigenous Issues  
400 Hualani St., Suite 194, Hilo, HI 96720  
U.S.A.



Dear Ms. M.B. Trask:

The Honorable Parliament of Rapa Nui sends its greetings with the highest respect and consideration to you and the organization you represent. In my capacity as Human Rights Officer and abiding under my responsibilities I am obliged to address the urgent need and priority issue regarding the well being of the people in the Rapa Nui Island. Our official request to you as U.N. Permanent Forum Expert is as follows:

Assistance in obtaining support for health programs for Rapa Nui people. Our current condition is a consequence of an unfortunate destiny of being annexed constitutionally to the Fifth Region of the Republic of Chile, which translates into scarce resources due to the isolation of distance from the island to such mainland region, which aggravates every endeavour up to the point of losing international donations that never reach us.

Assistance with our primary care services which has precarious resources, like insufficient budget, lack of adequate equipment, medical supplies, instruments, medicines, medical specialists and professionals, etc. As such, a significant number of patients are transferred by five-hour flights available only twice a week to the capital of Chile, and further on transported in ambulance two more hours to the Fifth Region public hospitals. Under such exhausting odyssey some patients return safe after treatment to the island, but a good number of people come back dead in coffins, unfortunately. Furthermore, lack of sufficient beds in the Chilean public hospitals have waiting lists that delays patient attention hours or days before a formal medical doctor diagnosis takes place.

Assistance for the Emergency Hospital (15 beds; 5,000 inhabitants), which was a donation of the U.S. in the late 1960's when a satellite tracking system was implemented in the island. This hospital was intended to last fifteen years, fully equipped but upon departure of the American base in 1970, a great number of equipment was transferred to mainland Chile by the health authorities.

Assistance with infant, children vaccinations, first aid, vitamins, medical supplies, equipment, professional care is extremely essential and useful.

Assistance with control of Aedes Aegypti vector that has been present in the island during the last two years spreading this infectious disease all over, with the consequent danger that dengue may become fatal when a person is bitten twice. The Chilean public health service has fumigated the entire island several times, notwithstanding the possible secondary consequences in respiratory diseases, allergies or even pesticide poisoning, or harmful for the environment. A program to control epidemics of dengue is urgently required.

As you can appreciate, health conditions in Rapa Nui are devastating and any direct help we can obtain will be beneficial for the entire population.

Looking forward to hear from you soon. We like to express our gratitude beforehand.

Very truly yours,

Erity Teave  
Human Rights Officer  
Rapa Nui Parliament

