

REPORT OF MAORI WOMENS WELFARE LEAGUE - AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND

AND

TE WHANAU O RONGOMAIWAHINE TRUST

PRESENTED AT UN WGIP GENEVE 27-7-93

WGIP 93/OCE - NZL/1

**Whakanui te hunga hanga te Taiao, te Ao Turoa,
te wehi, te ihi me te mana.**

I ruia mai nga kakano i Rangiatea.

I puawaitia i nga oneone o Papatuanuku.

Manakitia enei puawai tino tapu.

Tihei Mauriora ki nga tangata tukuiho mo te Ao Turoa.

Glory to the creator of the universe

Awesome powerful in command of his world.

The sacred seeds were strewn from the heavens.

Nurtured from the sands of Papatuanuku Earth Mother.

Cherish these sacred blooms of the world.

Honour the life force breathed into people,

the population for the Universe.

Te Rangitira Whaea-Rangatahai.

Tenakoutou Tenakoutou Tenakoutou katoa

This report will be given in two parts:

- 1) Maori Womens Welfare League
- 2) Te Whanau O Rongomaiwahine Trust

Madame Chairperson Te Whaea Erica Daez. To you we bring our greetings and Aroha.

The past year has seen many initiatives by MWWL and the most important of International significance would be the February meeting for Indigenous women of the world. This gathering was able to focus particularly on those issues the women believed were of importance to them.

Though topics were varied- environmental-cessation of the trafficking in plutonium-economic policies to stimulate business-representation in Parliament of Indigenous peoples-protection of cultures-challenging structures so that indigenous peoples may move forward to participate in decision making-these were but a few of the resolutions coming forward (resolutions and recommendation summary will be tabled with this paper). The overriding resolution of the womens gathering of the 1993 Indigenous Conference for Indigenous Women of the World was the same of that of the working group last week here in Geneva, that Indigenous Peoples have the right to self-determination.

The ongoing programs which our national President Mrs. Areata Koopu is hoping to continue over the next twelve months is the maintaining the motto of the MWWL (Tatau-Tatau). Together we move forward whether it is women to women or our organization and government.

Among the internal resolution is a call to our government to make funds available to support environmental programs of environmental education for the community and as a part of educational training.

That Maori, the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa be guaranteed equality of Maori representation in the governing of Aotearoa-New Zealand as of right.

The parenting program as the women see is also a very strong initiative of the MWWL and this will be advanced in the coming year for positive results for all families who see the need.

Finally the research into the genetic genome is of great concern and further investigations will be sought into the HUGO-Vampire Project. We seek priority for this from organizations also concerned around the world both indigenous and non-indigenous.

13. TE WHANAU O RONGOMAIWAHINE TRUST

Our tribal group has made the issue of environment and fishing their priority.

In the opening prayer we paid respect to Mother Earth-the sustainer of life on this planet. How come that we suffer the indignities of mining-oil drilling-storage of toxic waste-the abuse of our rivers and streams-and the milling of our forests?

All these things are having an effect on the people of our area. The threat of mining and of oil drilling off our peninsular by multi-national companies-the change of weather patterns and the topdressing on farm lands as well as spraying have a demoralizing and is a health risk to our people.

Rongomaiwahine have a traditional and customary right from time immemorial as a fishing tribe. With over forty families who look to fishing for their livelihood and sustenance-unfortunately this livelihood has been threatened by the multi-national companies who have invested in large fishing boats that ply our fishing grounds. The results of this has seen our fishing ground depleted-the abuse of our inshore fishing and the sustainable fishing for the future.

The dissemination of these fishing grounds has been at the whim of peoples from over seas who can afford to pay exorbitant prices for the luxury of purchasing our Koura (lobster), Kina (Sea eggs), Paua-Karengo (Type of seaweed). Why one asks do they come here to our south pacific island ?-----

1) Because the contamination of fish in the north sea through oil slicks-leaking nuclear reactors on the sea bed-the high mercury level reading in fish-and the greatest abuse of all, the over fishing in their own waters.

2) These big companies are out to make a profit immaterial of who they decimate on the way and now this has rebounded on the small fishermen in our own area where fishing quota are being cut back to where families will be penalized thus having an uneconomic base for survival.

Our tribal people are concerned re-decision making as to where boats should or should not fish. We have always worked on the traditional values of closing off areas when it was deemed necessary and as of this time government have the control. Long drawn out discussions are causing concern as to the sustainability of the fishing grounds in our area.

In fact the Maori fisheries settlement with regard to the Maori claims to the New Zealand commercial fishery resources was NOT supported by many tribes.

The implementation of commissions and structures in the political arena has not been of benefit to our people as of this time. This is where we see the rights of self-determination has not been respected. Our people have the right to protect our fishing as in the past, ALL peoples benefit by our stewardship of our fishing grounds.

The soul and spirit of Maori people can not be continually trampled on and it is sad that we need to seek the international forum for solidarity with other Indigenous Peoples against the subtleties of TRANS-NATIONAL and MULTI-NATIONAL companies.

Rongomaiwahine are very aware of the spiritual connection we have to water-it not only sustains us in our daily needs but it also our economic base. One is fresh and clean and wholesome-the life giving of survival-the other Tangaroa (the sea) the giver of sustenance Kaimoana (sea food), without the nurturing of both our survival would be in danger.

Distinguish Madame Chair person, we report to this working group our concerns and like other Indigenous Peoples elsewhere we hope to come to a commonality of action for the survival of Papatuanuku (Mother Earth) and therefore as the peoples of the world.

The past gives guidance to the future
Spiritual life does not change with time

We submit this report with the Kari Oca document of Rio 1992 the International Conference for Indigenous Women of the World Feb. 1993, Christchurch Aotearoa, New Zealand. We would also support Mataatua declaration.