

17/08/2019

AIM-West: Wakinyan LaPointe
Future Work of the Expert Mechanism,
Including Focus of Future Thematic Study
Item 9: 3 p.m.

Woope Wakan Ki Naunkicizinpi Ca Oyate Ki Mni Ki Wakan Yuhapi Kte Lo

Hau Mitakuyapi, greetings madam chair, members of EMRIP, dignitaries, and indigenous peoples

In 2017, indigenous peoples and youth launched the *Mni Ki Wakan: World Indigenous Peoples Decade of Water* to build strategic partnerships and collective innovation dedicated to the future of water. *Mni Ki Wakan* means *Water is Sacred*, it is not only our theme but our guiding mandate that carries us into the 3rd indigenous water decade on August 13-15, 2019, Black Hills, South Dakota, United States. My relatives, our global indigenous community of Mni Ki Wakan believes that water is not what divides us, but it is what connects us all.

My people know and believe they are made of water, the earth, the stars, and all creation. As I speak, they are dancing in ceremony without food and water honoring their sacred promise to Tunkashila (creator), creation, and future generations.

However, today, our waters are threatened. The TransCanada Corporation is working to construct the KXL pipeline in violation of the 1851 and 1868 Fort Laramie Treaties of the Oceti Sakowin (Seven Council Fires), otherwise known as the Great Sioux Nation, placing the very future of our sacred water into jeopardy. We urge EMRIP, and relevant UN agencies to support indigenous peoples and others to stop the Keystone XL pipeline.

Today, my delegation is here before you to call on the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to initiate a global study on indigenous peoples and water that is capable of elevating their water initiatives to unprecedented levels in decision-making, that may one day hold extractive industries accountable to the principle of *Free, Informed, and Prior Consent*, treaties, and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, my delegation recommends EMRIP, UN Water, UNESCO, and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues develop *indigenous coordinating water bodies* and declare an *indigenous water decade* that would maximize partnerships and coordination between indigenous peoples, global actors, and initiatives.

In closing, we call for a world where all water is recognized for its legal personhood and sacredness. We must put an end to water pollution before water pollution puts an end to us. Water is one of our greatest opportunities for global transformation.

Wopila Tanka Cicu Pelo Mitakuye Oyas'in