

Pacific Caucus Joint Statement

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Sixth Session

New York – 14-25 May 2007-05-17

Item 4 Implementation of recommendations on the six mandated areas and on Millennium Development Goals

(c) Health

(d) Education

Joint Statement by the Pacific Caucus presented by Sarimin Boengkih

Madame Chairperson, as you know for the Pacific Indigenous Peoples, health and education issues in our region cannot be dissociated from lack of control over our land, our territories and the natural resources. Health and education issues also always sound two words colonialism and globalisation. A certain number of Indigenous peoples of the Pacific are, in the statistics, included in the main population of the most developed nations, but still are part of the peoples that have the poorest state of health, and that is consequent to the colonial situation in which they live and also as there are first to be exposed to the worst impacts of globalisation.

Madame Chair, we have already heard many speakers giving details on the issues, therefore the recommendations we will come directly with our recommendations before going into their justifications.

Recommendations on health :

1. The Permanent Forum to call upon the governments to take all necessary and appropriate measures to improve the state of health of the indigenous peoples, including by incorporating within the official health services, the knowledge and knowhow in traditional medicine, and to organise the training of medics and paramedics in the better comprehension of the indigenous peoples different cultures.
2. The Permanent Forum to urge member States to adopt appropriate legislations to protect Indigenous peoples' land, territories and resources from any exploitation by the extractive industries that would only provoke the destruction of the endemic bio-diversity that Indigenous peoples have been protecting for thousands of years, such rich bio-diversity being the source for food, medication and the environment being the source of their spirituality.
3. The Permanent Forum to call upon member states to protect the indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and intangible heritage from biopiracy ;
4. The Permanent Forum to urge member states to abolish all economic policies that tend to force indigenous peoples to migrate from their homeland to urban areas where they end up living under conditions unacceptable for human beings and to upgrade the living conditions of the urbanised Indigenous peoples to a non discriminated and decent level.

Recommendations on Education

1. We call upon the Permanent Forum to coordinate activities with UNESCO to conduct an investigation on the educational affairs of Native Hawaiians;
2. We call upon the Permanent Forum to recommend to the General Assembly for the immediate adoption and enforcement of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples;
3. The Permanent Forum to strongly urge all concerned Governments to provide significant funding, resources, and facilities for Native Hawaiian educational programs;
4. The Permanent Forum to call upon all Governments to implement UNESCO's plan of action relating to indigenous curricula;
5. The Permanent Forum to call all Governments to implement the recommendations of Vernoz Munoz, Special Rapporteur, which identified the type of public policy and strategies, particularly regarding education coverage and quality, as one of the major challenges for an effective and full realization of the right to education for indigenous peoples.

The catastrophic health situation of the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific region also come from

Amongst the colonial habits inherited from the colonial era is the governmental authorities reluctance to incorporate into the health care and services provided to our peoples the knowledge and knowhow of the traditional medicine. This attitude facilitate the increase of social issues and is also the reason why so many so called mental diseases cannot be understood by western psychiatrics that have no consideration for our cultures and beliefs.

Most Indigenous peoples of the Pacific live ten or more years less than the population of European descents. Infant mortality is twice to three times higher. Alcohol and drug abuses is chronic and diabetes is consequent to the changes in food consumption imposed first by the colonial situation and strengthen by globalisation.

The Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific suffer from the lack of consideration for their cultures, their spiritualities, their languages, their traditional knowledge. The education provided to Indigenous children in a language that is foreign to them, with a curriculum that has neither connection with their environment nor tie to Mother earth, can only turn our children into under-educated adults within a society dominated by a language and a culture foreign to Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you Madame Chairperson.