

United Nations Working Group on
Indigenous Populations
Eleventh Session
19 - 30 July 1993

Agenda Item 5: Review of
Developments

Statement on behalf of the
Second World Indigenous Youth
Conference

Delivered by
Mr. Jorgen Waever Johansen

Madam Chairman,
Members of the Working Group,
Goodwill Ambassador to the U.N., Rigoberta Menchu
Indigenous elders, brothers and sisters:

Watchiya (Greetings - Cree)
Tihei Mauri Ora (I express my essence - Maori)
Pingaarutilimmik Nalunaarutissaqarpugut (We have something
important to express - Greenlandic Inuktitut)
Arranda Aknarra (A new circle - Arranda)
Taintragual dew (of Unity has been formed - Mapudungun)

Madam Chairman,
What has just been said is of special significance to
Indigenous youth. It is symbolic of the New Era that young
Indigenous peoples have entered. It is a combination of
five different Indigenous languages, which communicates one
thing: "A new circle of unity has been formed among
Indigenous youth"

My name is Jorgen Waever Johansen, I am an Inuit from
Kalaallit Nunaat, commonly known as Greenland. I have been
given the honour to speak on behalf of the 2000 Indigenous
youth from several hundred Indigenous nations, represented
at the 2nd World Indigenous Youth Conference, which was
held from 5th to the 11th of July in Darwin, Australia.

The theme of the Conference was "Claiming Our Future". As
a gathering, organised BY Indigenous Youth FOR Indigenous
Youth, the Conference was a positive expression of our
self-determination.

At this point, Madam Chairman, I would like to express our
deepest and sincere gratitude to the organisers of the
Conference, and the Larrakia nation of Darwin for allowing
us to meet on their land. I would also like to express our
feelings of unity with the Peoples who were unable to
attend the Conference, and regret they could not join us.

We give thanks to the Cree Nation Youth Council, who set
the foundations of this Youth Movement at the 1st World
Indigenous Youth Conference in Quebec City, Canada in 1992.

Madam Chairman, the following statements, that I will read,
are some of the views and demands as expressed by young
Indigenous Peoples represented at the Conference.

We, Indigenous youth recognise self-determination is a
right which cannot be given. It is a right which is
exercised, to increase self-respect and therefore respect
among Indigenous peoples.

As our sister from the Australian youth expressed, young
people are the leaders of the future. Our elders, leaders,
and Governments must recognise our demand for greater
participation in decision making processes. We must be

involved in these consultations, as decisions made today will affect us as youth tomorrow.

Madam Chairman, Indigenous Youth demand that nation states honour and comply with treaties deemed acceptable by Indigenous Peoples, where these treaties exist.

We as youth demand the annulment of treaties and other forms of land rights agreements negotiated in ambiguity.

Where treaties do not exist, we demand that nation states take immediate action to negotiate just and permanent agreements with our Peoples. Indigenous Peoples reserve the right to decide whether or not we will negotiate.

Madam Chairman, on the issues of culture and education, we as youth must have the freedom to learn our true histories. We make a call to our elders to open the way for us to learn about our heritage: to help us reclaim our past so we may claim our future.

We demand the right to reclaim and revive our languages. Moreover, we demand the right to speak our languages without fear of discrimination.

Indigenous Youth recognise women form the backbone of our cultural identity. Indigenous womens' issues must be recognised as human rights issues, requiring the full support and participation of men.

Madam Chairman, I would now like to inform you of developments relating to the establishment of an international network of Indigenous youth. Members of this network are sitting with me as I speak. We call on the United Nations, through the Working Group, to recognise and support this network and its activities globally to unite and empower Indigenous youth.

We remind the Working Group of its in principle support for this movement, at its Tenth Session.

We strongly urge the Working Group to repeat its call to other U.N. agencies, and governments to provide the necessary resources to facilitate the establishment of this Indigenous youth initiative.

In conclusion, Madam Chairman, these statements capture the discussion and common views shared at the 2nd World Indigenous Youth Conference. We must continue to revive our cultural heritage for ourselves, to educate non-Indigenous people about our ways of life and exercise our will to survive, because we are the First Nations.

Copies of the official document from our conference are available, at the back of the conference room. And Copies will provided for the members of the Working Group, Madam Chairman.

Taamaalillutalu Nunat Inogqaavisa Inuusuttaaniit
saqqummiussinerput naammassivarput, qujavugullu maani
ataatsimeersuarnermi isummagut, piumasagaatigullu
saqqummiussinnaasimagatsigit.

Qujanaq.

Thank you.