

Buffalo River Dene Nation
CISA



Economic and Social Council
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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The United Nations

My name is Adelard Blackman. I am here today as the Special Emissary for Chief Elmer Campbell and the people of Buffalo River Dene Nation in Northern Saskatchewan, Canada. I would like to thank Consejo Indio de Sud America for giving us the opportunity to address the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Mr. Chairman, we, the Buffalo River Dene Nation, give full support to the Indigenous Women's Caucus and the recommendations put forward by them. We request the Forum to take into consideration the following recommendation. *The Permanent Forum should underline the importance of article 36 of the Draft Declaration and recommend to the Human Rights Commission on the Working Group of the Draft Declaration to draft a provision underlining the necessity to establish an international body with the competence to address issues concerning treaties between Indigenous Peoples and states.*

We, the people of the Buffalo River Dene Nation, continue to suffer from human rights violations perpetrated by the Canadian government in many forms. The systematic breaking of our Treaties and implementation of legislation without free and prior informed consent that has long-term consequences for our Territories, Natural Resources and Right to Self Determination. We know that the Canadian government's objective is to do away with our Treaties and that **assimilation** is their only agenda. If they are allowed to continue in this direction, we as Treaty Indians will be extinct legally within the next 50 years.

We, the people of the Buffalo River Dene Nation, cannot sit by and let this happen while our people die for no reason other than giving up hope for a future. Therefore we, the Buffalo River Dene Nation, have come to take action against the Canadian government and the multinational corporations within our Territories. Having exhausted all legal avenues, I refer to the case of Sylvester/Caterac versus the Queen at the Supreme Court of Canada, we have made the decision to bring our case before the International Court of Justice in The Hague, The Netherlands in 2007 which will focus on the human rights violations of our people and the loss of our Treaty Rights.

No Indigenous People has ever made it into the International Court of Justice. Governments and many people tell us that it is not possible. We, the people of the Buffalo River Dene Nation, have made our decision. How can the International Community live with a clear conscience if the international rule of law does not apply to Indigenous Peoples?

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Women of the Buffalo River Dene Nation, I thank you and your colleagues for the work you are doing for all Indigenous Peoples to gain recognition and respect for our right to live.

Ma Cee Chou (Thank you very much)