



The Navajo Nation

Mr. Colburn

Intervention on United Nations Systems Action to
Implement the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Your excellencies,

Indigenous Nations, Brothers & Sisters, Ladies & Gentlemen

United Nations Headquarters
New York, New York
September 22, 2014

#1 The Navajo Nation is not a nongovernmental organization ("NGO"), a civil society, or recognized as a Nation-State by the United Nations. For more than twenty years, the Navajo Nation had to either register under the auspices of an NGO in order to participate in U.N. activities or simply not participate.

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#3 With the advent of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the U.N. recognizes that indigenous peoples have the right to their governing institutes. For the Navajo Nation, it has an elaborate government with an executive, legislative, and judicial branch where the Navajo people elect their representatives.

#4 While NGOs and civil societies enjoy the privilege of participating in the U.N. activities, indigenous nations with elected officials that are responsible to their people are limited in full participation in U.N. activities. It is clear that indigenous nations are responsible to their people, lands, territories and resources, yet NGOs have a higher stature than the Navajo Nation. The U.N. must amend its current system and move and think forward in order for indigenous nations to have a seat at the table and fully and meaningfully participate in U.N. activities.

My name is Justice & Government



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United Nations Plenary Session

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The Navajo Nation has been advocating for the rights of the Navajo people since their contact with foreigners on our lands. We have fought for our right to self-determination, self-governance, and the lands, territories and resources that is rightfully ours. In addition, we have fought for the United States in the last world war by serving as Navajo Code Talkers and thereafter.

#2 *call in* More recently, the Navajo Nation was engaged in negotiating the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples because the Navajo people's human rights were not respected, protected and remedied. Keeping with the spirit of the United Nations Charter, the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples must affirm the fundamental human rights of indigenous people; in the dignity and worth of the indigenous person; in the equal rights of all men, women and children; and of nations large and small. We must all practice tolerance and live together in peace as good neighbors.

The Navajo Nation is excited by the fact that the world community recognizes the rights of all indigenous peoples, as it is exemplified in this world conference. The Navajo Nation is excited by the probability that one day it will have a permanent place in the U.N. systems. The U.N. treaty bodies and U.N. organs have deliberated issues that affect the Navajo people, yet the Navajo people's representative does not have a seat at the table.

In closing, I congratulate the President of the General Assembly in convening this world conference and look forward to a meaningful dialogue over the course of two days.