

**AIM-West  
Thorne Bordeaux**

Greetings Madam Chair, distinguished guests, indigenous peoples, youth, and relatives

On May 19th, 2016, at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 15th Session, indigenous delegate, Nancy Bordeaux, provided an intervention on water, announcing the Mni Ki Wakan: World Indigenous Peoples' Decade of Water Summit, held July 31st to August 2nd, 2017.

In the first year, an international indigenous community emerged to lay the foundation for the next 9 years of the water summit. Therefore, it is not surprising we offer today's intervention in support of indigenous peoples and our human right to water, which not only includes safe drinking water and access to adequate sanitation, but also the protection of our spiritual relationship to water and the oceans, as stated in Article 25 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

"Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their spiritual relationship with their traditional territories, or otherwise occupied, or newly acquired in fulfilling their responsibility to future generations."

The UN has repeatedly said that future conflicts and wars will be over water. 71 percent of the Earth's surface is water, 2.5 percent is freshwater that has been increasingly demarcated and targeted by agriculture, extractive industries, and public sectors. For too long, indigenous peoples have been ignored and denied their basic human right to water.

We recommend that the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues support the *Mni Ki Wakan: World Indigenous Peoples' Decade of Water Summit* for the next nine years.

We recommend that the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues help formulate with relevant UN agencies an indigenous coordinating water group to be responsive and supportive of indigenous water initiatives globally.

We respectfully call upon UN Water to work in cooperation with indigenous peoples of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to ensure our genuine representation in the ongoing global dialogue and decision-making concerning water.

Furthermore, we recommend that the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues convene a group to begin the preliminary conversation of creating a specialized *World Indigenous Peoples Water Forum*.

We invite representatives of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to the August 2018 commencement of the *Mni Ki Wakan: World Indigenous Peoples' Decade of Water Summit*.

We look forward to the day when all water has received the recognition and protections of legal personality that it deserves.

In closing madam chair, we support the statement by the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, Jean Roach, of AIM-West to free Leonard Peltier.