



INTERVENTION OF **NA KOA IKAİKA O KA LAHUI HAWAII**

Item #: 1 Topic: Economic & Social Development

Presenter: Le'a Kanehe

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving Na Koa Ikaika o Ka Lahui Hawai'i this opportunity to address the first session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The International Human Rights covenants recognize that all peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Therefore, for Indigenous Peoples to meaningfully develop our economic and social resources, we must be granted an unqualified right of self-determination.

Our interventions of prior years at the Working Group in Geneva have explained that the Indigenous Peoples of Hawai'i have always been excluded from the United States policy for Native Self-Governance. The land trusts created by the U.S. Congress as part of the Compact of Admission of Hawai'i into the Union have never been allocated to our peoples. Because Native Hawaiians are wards of the State, the vast amount of our lands have not been used by Native Hawaiians for our own economic and social development, but rather by the State of Hawai'i and federal U.S. government for public and military uses.

The facts reveal that Native Hawaiians are the wealthiest of the Indigenous Peoples within U.S. borders. Our resources include 1.8 million acres of land, as well as vast marine and geothermal resources. Despite these valuable resources, our peoples occupy the lowest economic status in our homeland. This impoverished condition is not a result of having deficient resources. Rather, it is a direct result of being prohibited from using and controlling our lands and seas and associated resources.

Hawai'i has the dubious distinction of being the State in the U.S. with the most extinct and endangered species. Similarly, much of our lands lay in a toxic condition because the state and federal governments do not have responsible policies for utilization of land-based resources. As a result, we lose the opportunity to pursue truly sustainable development. But today, we face imminent water shortages while millions of gallons are lost to economies such as tourism and cash-crop agriculture that degrade our culture and do not feed our peoples. These practices deny future generations the opportunity to live in a sustainable manner. We need opportunities for development that use renewable resources, rather than just the rampant consumption of resources.

In traditional times, before the coming of the colonizer, the Hawaiian archipelago supported a population of over 1 million people. We were able to feed, clothe and house ourselves. Today, Hawai'i has approximately the same population, with Native Hawaiians only comprising approximately 20% of that population, but imports 85% of the food and goods we consume and almost 100% of our energy resources. Hawai'i is no longer self-sustaining as a result of irresponsible development. Traditional consumptive practices worked and we understood the natural carrying capacity of our islands. But western practices have only made us dependent and have not brought us economic self-

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sufficiency. We are capable and willing to use culturally appropriate modern technology which can be utilized in a sustainable manner, however, because we do not have jurisdiction over our resources we do not have decision- and policy-making power.

In conclusion, we want to lend our voice of support to discussions going on in the UN in preparation for the World Conference on Sustainable Development. Particularly, we support the positions taken in the Dialogue Paper by Indigenous Peoples during the Second Preparatory Session of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Segment, identified by locator number E/CN.17/2002/PC.2/6/Add.3. We urge all nations to examine this document because it thoroughly and accurately reflects the indigenous perspective on sustainable economic development.

Aloha a mahalo nui.

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