

Pacific Caucus
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Headquarters, New York

Collective Statement on Behalf of the Pacific Caucus

Item 7: Urban Indigenous People and Migration

Presenter: Kai`opua Fyfe, The Koani Foundation, Hawai`i Ka Pae `Aina

Madam Chair, distinguished Members of the Permanent Forum, Fellow Representatives of Non Governmental Organizations, States and Agencies:

Aloha kakou apau loa, greetings to all of us. I am Kai`opua Fyfe, Kanaka Hawai`i Maoli, speaking on behalf of the Pacific Caucus.

Madam Chair, as you have so appropriately stated, "Ensuring indigenous rights over lands and natural resources is a prerequisite to the very survival of indigenous peoples and their cultures."

And, that very survival you articulate is a function of the inextricable relationship of indigenous peoples with their natural environment, the land, the sea, the air, all of the elements and forces of our natural universe.

In the Hawaiian cosmology, Papa, the Earth Mother and Wakea, the Sky Father mated and gave birth to Haloa, progenitor to all Kanaka Hawai`i Maoli. When Haloa was planted in the soil of Hawai`i ka Pae `Aina, there grew forth the beautiful, nutritious Kalo plant, or Taro, that sustains our people over thousands of years.

It is well known that, as our brother the Kalo flourishes, healthy and strong, so do the Kanaka Hawai`i Maoli flourish, healthy and strong. As our environment deteriorates due to negligence, mismanagement, pollution, excessive agricultural, industrial and commercial development and arrogant disrespect, so does the health and vitality of our Brother Kalo and the Kanaka Hawai`i Maoli deteriorate.

This is where our environment, and we, the Indigenous People of the Pacific Caucus, and beyond, are today; in a state of spiraling deterioration due to negligence, mismanagement, pollution, excessive agricultural, industrial and commercial development and arrogant disrespect at the hands of our dominant colonizers and occupiers.

The cosmologies of our various Pacific Caucus Cousins are unique, and we all celebrate those differences, but our mana, our essence is identical. Our issues

and problems are unique, but our basic needs and the solutions to meet those needs are identical.

In Australia, our Indigenous Cousins are currently facing there government's commitment to "*harness the mainstream*" public services, such as health, housing, education and employment at the expense of indigenous-specific services in both urban centers and remote areas of the country. The Government's objective being assimilation.

In Aotearoa, our Cousins are currently dealing with court-ordered forced relocations of at-risk, dysfunctional Maori from urban centers to remote tribal lands other than their own. The resulting impact on the non-family communities and the relocated parties are traumatic and destructive.

In Hawai'i, the Department of Hawaiian Homelands, with a noble mission to remove indigenous Hawaiians from unfamiliar dysfunctional urban settings and return them to traditional healthy functions on agricultural, pastoral and homestead lands, has a long history of disservice to the Kanaka beneficiaries; a history of not serving the needs due to poor planning and lack of management and financial expertise. Most applicants to the DHHL programs must consider relocating to Homeland developments of other islands, away from their ancestral lands and resources.

Madam Chair, in keeping with the letter and spirit of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, as recommended by the Human Rights Council, in essence, Articles 8 and 10 regarding forced assimilation and destruction of culture, and forcible removal from lands and territories respectively, we the Pacific Caucus recommend that:

1. The Permanent Forum request that a Special Rapporteur undertake a study on the issues related to the urbanization and migration of Indigenous Peoples, paying particular attention to their abilities to enjoy their cultural, economical, social and political rights and that this study be considered at the 7th Session of the Permanent Forum; and
2. That the Permanent Forum strongly encourage the UN General Assembly to adopt without amendment or delay, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, rejecting the inappropriate alternative text proposed by the African Group.