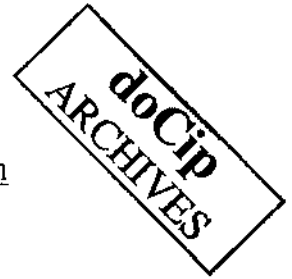


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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

1st Session, May 13-24, 2002

United Nations New York

Agenda Item #5 – Education and Culture

'Ae, e na 'Aumakua o ka po	Oh Ancestors of the night
E na 'Aumakua o ke ao	Oh Ancestors of the day
E malama a e ho'oulu i na pulapula	Preserve & inspire your descendants
A kolo pupu, a haumaka'iole	Until we are so old that our eyes are bleary like a rat,
A pala lauhala, a ka'ikoko	Our skin faded & can no longer walk
E pale i na mea 'ino a pau e	Protect us from all evil.
Amama. Ua noa. Ua lele wale aku no e.	The prayer has ended, is free & has already flown.

Greetings to you, the descendants of the ancient Native nations of the world.
I bring blessings and spiritual support from the 40,000 Hawaiian ancestral
Gods to each of you in your important life giving work.

My name is Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa. I am the Director of the Center for
Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, and I am here to
speak as an expert witness on behalf of Ka Lahui Hawai'i, a Native initiative
for Hawaiian self-determination, comprised of 19,000 citizens who reside in
the Hawaiian islands and elsewhere, and has seated a government in exile.

I would first like to congratulate you Professor Maaga, and all members of
the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for this long awaited historic
meeting. I would like to especially thank the Haudenasaunee nation for
hosting us and thank our delegate from Oceania, Mililani Trask for her
continual good work on behalf of our people in Hawai'i and in the Pacific.

It is a great honor to be allowed to give testimony on the issue of the
Education and Culture, on behalf of the Hawaiian people who have lived in
Hawai'i for 100 generations or the past 2,000 years. Today however, the
culture of the Hawaiian people is gravely endangered and the standard of

education in the wisdom of our Hawaiian ancestors, as well as in that of the American colonizer, is nothing short of abysmal, especially in light of international standards.

I would like to quote the following from Articles 12, 13, 14 & 15 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

“Indigenous peoples have the right to their cultural traditions and customs. This includes aspects of their culture such as sacred sites, designs, ceremonies, technologies and performances.

Indigenous peoples have the right to their spiritual and religious traditions, their customs and their ceremonies. They have the right to their sacred sites, ceremonial objects and remains of their ancestors.

Indigenous peoples have the right to their histories, languages, oral traditions, stories, writings and their own names for people and places.

Indigenous children have the right to the same education as all other children. Indigenous peoples also have the right to their own schools and to provide education in their own languages. Indigenous children who do not live in indigenous communities shall be able to learn their own culture and language.”

Mr. Chairman, it is my sad duty to report that while the Native Hawaiian population now number 405,000 persons in the United States of America, only 3500 still speak the language of our Hawaiian ancestors. Of the 3500, only 500 of these are Native speakers, and the other 3000 are children in Hawaiian Immersion schools established in 1985 to try to save our language.

Of the 405,000 Hawaiians, 40% are forced to live outside of our homeland because of the scarcity of land for Hawaiians in Hawai'i and the extremely high cost of living, furthering the loss of our culture. Please note that Hawaiians are the only Native people in the Pacific who do not control a land base in their own homeland. It is difficult to walk in the footsteps of the ancestors when there is no land to walk upon.

The bones of our ancestors and our sacred sites are continually destroyed by the American military and its live fire bombing practice on our lands. Our herbal medicines are stolen by pharmaceutical companies. Our true culture,

including ceremonies, technologies, and dances are prostituted by the tourist industry.

The language of the ancestors is the key to the wisdom of the ancestors, but the Hawaiian language was outlawed by our American colonizers in 1896, and our parents and grandparents were beaten in school and fired from their jobs for speaking Hawaiian.

As a result, Hawaiians suffer from poor self identity and attendant terrible social ills, impacting both culture and education. Hawaiians have the lowest life expectancy, the highest infant mortality, the highest percentage of children in slow learning [special education] classes, and the highest number of high school drop outs. Hawaiians are over represented in prison, in deaths caused by suicide, and in risky behaviors such as abuse of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

Of the 48,000 Hawaiian children in English language schools, only 5% will go on to college, and far too many will matriculate into prison. This is a result of the degradation of Hawaiian names, language, culture, and identity, so commonly experienced in Hawai'i's public schools.

Thus, while Native Hawaiians comprise 23% of the general population in Hawai'i, at the university where I teach, Hawaiians comprise a scant 10% of the students, 3% of the professors, and are not represented at all in the administration of that university. All aspects of Hawaiian education, both in English and in Hawaiian, and from kindergarten to college, are severely underfunded.

Therefore, with all due respect and humility, Ka Lahui Hawai'i urges the following actions that support the self determination so needed for the survival of our culture and improvement of our education.

First, Ka Lahui Hawai'i unequivocally supports the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as adopted by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples and the Sub-Commission on Human Rights in 1993 and 1994, respectively.

Ka Lahui Hawai'i calls upon the members of the permanent forum to discuss and address the issues of self-determination, the "s" in peoples and the

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Additionally, we call upon all UN agencies to do the same.

Second, because there are only (2) years left in the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, our delegation requests that the members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues seek extension of the international decade for another ten (10) years, from 2005-2014.

Nation/states have failed to address or resolve the plight of the world's indigenous peoples. The track record of these governments and agencies on indigenous peoples have been poor and sometimes horrific. Only now that the PPFI has been formed, a few governments have begun to work with Indigenous peoples. Clearly, more time is needed.

Third, Mr. Chair, Ka Lahui Hawai'i would like to address the issue of informed consent in all areas where indigenous peoples are affected. In order for true partnerships to occur, all parties, in particular indigenous peoples, should be involved in the formal consultations and implementation before anything is initiated. No project, activity or development, especially in culture and education should be implemented without the informed consent of the indigenous peoples.

Lastly, the budget of the PFII needs to be a top priority. Since there will be numerous UN conferences and activities in various parts of the world, including the important World Conference on Sustainable Development, members of the PFII should be provided with the necessary funding to participate in these forums, seminars, and conventions, in order for them to carry out their responsibilities.

Mr. Chair, the need for inclusion of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues into the UN budget is critical and of utmost importance. I suggest as a demonstration of good faith that governments pay a yearly tithe to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, of US\$1 per Indigenous person living within their country boundaries, as partial initial compensation for the occupation of Native lands by those governments.

In closing, Mr. Chair, Ka Lahui Hawai'i has not been included in the dissemination of information, nor in any UN activities as it relates to education and culture. Therefore, we call upon this body as well as UNESCO and other UN support agencies to provide the necessary

educational tools to empower Native Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians in our islands about its work and related activities. Ka Lahui Hawai'i looks forward to continued dialogue and collaboration on these important matters, and hopes you will consider our recommendations as a matter of urgency.

Mahalo (thank you) Mr. Chair.