

**Grace Smith Yellow Hammer, Din'eh Intervention  
Permanent Forum**



**Opening blessing**

**My name is Grace Smith Yellow Hammer. I come from the land, the mountains, the springs in the land now called Arizona.**

**For many years, I have been working with my people to preserve our traditional, spiritual and cultural practices, and to regain our rights of access to our traditional lands. When we lived on our traditional land in accordance with our original instructions, our spiritual and cultural life was in harmony. Now that harmony has been disrupted.**

**When we weave, we sing the traditional songs. When we work the land and tend to our livestock, we perform our prayers. Since we have lost access to our traditional lands, we have lost many of our traditional ways. We are losing our songs, our stories, our culture. I would like to second my Ayamara sister's request for more support for preserving and documenting oral cultures and traditions.**

**But time is short. Our culture, language and basic rights are diminishing every day. As Din'eh who have been relocated forcibly from our land, we don't have any basic rights to our land and cultural survival. We don't even have the right to be buried on our ancestral lands. Our treaties have been broken. We have no recourse.**

**Because our land rests in the heart of the US, we are often overlooked in terms of funding. Yet, the traditional people do not participate in the wealth of the land, we are oppressed and isolated by it. There are no funding sources for traditional people in the United States, yet any visitor to our lands would swear they were in a fourth world country.**

**We need assistance in regaining and preserving our basic human rights to our land, our sacred ways, and our cultural survival.**

**I have come many times to the United Nations, both here and in Geneva. Now, our voices are being heard, but, fundamentally, little has changed.**

**I believe we must continue to meet as indigenous nations to protect our sacred sites, land, culture and way of life. We need ongoing assistance and rights monitoring from the relevant UN agencies. We are thankful for this meeting, but it is a small first step in a very long journey.**

**Grace Smith Yellow Hammer  
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