

**First Session of the Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues
UN Headquarters, New York
13 – 24 May, 2002**



**Agenda Item: 5
General Statements**

**Intervention by
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Mr. Chairman,

When the Economic and Social Council proceeded to establish this Forum, it decided – through its Resolution 2000/22 (at paragraph) – that “organizations of indigenous peoples may equally participate as observes in accordance with the procedures which have been applied in the Working Group on Indigenous Populations”. Because of this, I can participate in this meeting by using the name of my own organization, without having to come through an accredited NGO having consultative status with ECOSOC as a Category I, II or Roster NGO. Similarly, in the process leading up to the forthcoming review of all existing UN mechanisms, procedures and programmes within the United Nations concerning indigenous issues, the Secretary General is to seek information from indigenous peoples’ organizations as well as from governments, NGOs etc. These matters are contained in paragraph 8 of ECOSOC Resolution 2000/22 and paragraph (e) of ECOSOC Decision 2001/316.

We have made a lot of progress in opening up the doors of the UN to indigenous peoples, and the first session of this Forum is proof of that. We need to carry forward this process to make indigenous participation fuller and more effective.

Of course, attendance at, and participation in, the meetings of this Forum is the most effective form of participation. However, for fuller participation, indigenous peoples also need to have equal access to information about the Permanent Forum process, including its annual meetings, and to be able to suggest matters for inclusion in the agenda, in an equal manner with bodies of the UN, member states and ECOSOC accredited NGOs.

At present, the work methods of this Forum are guided by the “Rules of Procedure of the Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council” read with relevant ECOSOC resolutions. Paragraph 2 and paragraph 4 of Rule 5 of these Rules provide that the provisional agenda [of the concerned body] will include items proposed by the body itself [the Permanent Forum in our case] at a previous session, the General Assembly, the

Councils, members of the UN, the chairperson, the Secretary General, the specialized agencies, and NGOs with Category I status. This means that institutions and organizations of indigenous peoples will not be entitled to make agenda item suggestions unless they have Category I status. As far as I am aware, no indigenous people's organization has such a status.

Another related rule, being Rule 38 of the aforesaid rules provides that the text of the formal decisions and reports [of the concerned body] will be provided to members of the UN, the specialized agencies, and NGOs with category I, II or Roster status. This is more inclusive, and there are some indigenous peoples' organizations having the aforesaid status, but most of the indigenous nations and peoples and their institutions and organizations attending this meeting will not satisfy the aforesaid criteria.

Therefore, in keeping with the spirit of Ecosoc Resolution 2000/22, I would humbly suggest that this Forum advise the Economic and Social Council to take adequate steps to enable indigenous nations, peoples and their organizations and institutions attending Permanent Forum meetings to have the same privileges as those granted to Category I NGOs with regard to access to information and the prerogative of suggesting agenda items. I would leave it to my wise sisters and brothers, the members of this Forum, to deliberate on whether this entails an amendment to the concerned Rules through ECOSOC or whether the same objective can be achieved through the resolutions of the Forum itself, or resolutions of ECOSOC, or otherwise.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.