

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 20th Session, April 19-30, 2021

Agenda Item 7: Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues considered by the Economic and Social Council and emerging issues, specifically challenges related to pandemics and responses to them

Intervention by Nation of Hawai‘i, presented by Lindsay Kukona Pakele

Mahalo Madame Chair and *aloha* to all delegations. COVID-19 presented us with the opportunity to reimagine a more sustainable economy for Hawai‘i, as people focused on producing more products locally, tourism slowed down and our lands and oceans had the chance to cleanse themselves.

Nation of Hawai‘i utilized this time to expand our traditional land management system on our sovereign land base of Pu‘uhonua O Waimānalo by growing our traditional foods and medicines, and removing invasive eucalyptus trees as part of our reforestation efforts by producing lumber, essential oil and leaves for local florists. We care for our lands using the wisdom of our *kūpuna*, provide alternatives to imported goods, and utilize innovation and technology to create easier ways to produce, market and sell these sustainable products. The UN must support indigenous-led land management systems and sustainable economies because our peoples know best how to care for our lands and utilize our resources in a sustainable way.

The UN has declared that internet access is a human right. There has never been a time in human history where the world depended more on internet access than during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the global shutdown kept people quarantined at home and doing most daily tasks online. Because of its rural location, Nation of Hawai‘i lacked reliable internet access. However, in November 2019, the Nation partnered with the Internet Society and Burt Lum from the State of Hawai‘i to create Hawai‘i’s first community broadband network, which allowed families in our *pu‘uhonua* to engage in remote school and work during the pandemic. Without our community broadband network, our citizens would have been victims of the digital divide that plagues many indigenous peoples.

We recommend that the Permanent Forum provide funding and technical assistance to support indigenous peoples’ food and economic sovereignty.

We also recommend that the Permanent Forum support indigenous peoples in increasing access to the internet by helping create more community broadband networks. *Mahalo.*