

Te Kawau Maro  
Maori Organization from Aotearoa-New Zealand.  
May 15 2002. New York Permanent Forum.  
Mr. Chairman



This intervention is made by Te Kawau Maro, Maori Organisation from Aotearoa- New Zealand of the Pacific.

This is our first intervention therefore in acknowledging time constraints, some general comments, followed by recommendations will be made and may I begin with greetings from the Maori people of Aotearoa to the peoples of this land, to the Chairperson, Permanent Forum representatives, Indigenous brothers and sisters, member States and those who have past on. Mr. Chairman there were those who doubted the Permanent Forum would be established, and even if it were the Permanent Forum would lack any significant influence. Those of us who are optimistic know that this is a first step conditional upon our full participation and equal control of every part of the establishment of the Permanent Forum. It is also our collective duty to ensure the permanent forum is effective and fulfills the Mandate set before it.

In the context of Maori people, our ancestors arrived at the League of Nations in 1926 seeking an International forum; they were among other Indigenous peoples of that time. Successive Maori have continued the tradition of seeking effective International forums. Today is a continuation of such history.

The Minister of Maori Affairs for the New Zealand Government, Parekura Horomia is also a tribal member of the tribe Ngati Porou, of which I am also a member. In his paper he detailed the financial contribution made to the interim Secretariat of the Permanent Forum from New Zealand. Further support in the form of technical personnel to the Office of the High Commission of Human Rights and financial support to the Voluntary fund. That support is acknowledged. He underscored these facts with stating his attendance here as a Minister, an executive Minister, showed his governments commitment to Indigenous issues in the United Nations and further that empowering and enabling Maori to solve their own problems is the objective, for Indigenous peoples to take leading roles in the economic lives of countries. In our view that is the purpose of this exercise, of this Permanent Forum, no more continued neo-colonialism but empowerment, problem solving and leadership. If we see a deviation or stalling of this purpose we have a duty as we do domestically, to intervene and react accordingly in this International forum.

Therefore we would like to hear from member States a commitment in a substantive manner by requesting establishing finances from the regular budget, sufficiently to reflect the work and broad mandate of the Permanent forum. Other speakers have suggested it helpful to analysis other UN Agency budgets, which will indicate an estimate of the sums and resources, required. It must be remembered the many decades Indigenous Peoples have not had the use or access of their resources, or an International Agency and it is common knowledge who has benefited and where those resources have been allocated.

1 We make a first recommendation for a substantial financed Permanent Forum, with consultation in every part of the financial process with Representatives of the Permanent Forum or at least an established sub-committee of the Permanent Forum Representatives, anything less is not acceptable.

2 The Secretariat is another opportunity for Indigenous Peoples empowerment. A second recommendation is that the Secretariat be Indigenous led and staffed by appropriate Indigenous personnel as an independent Secretariat linked to ECOSOC. This is not to say other support is unwelcome, on the contrary the support of the United Nations Agency Group is commended, as is non-Indigenous support. The intervention is simply saying the time for an Indigenous led and driven International Agency has arrived. Contrary objections undermine support for Indigenous empowerment.

3 Mr. Chairman, subject to time frames and administrative details of which we have no knowledge, a third recommendation is that a full report proposing finance and secretarial budget and administration be submitted for discussion at the next Permanent Forum meeting.

The questions asked by the Pacific Representative Mililani Trask, of the United Nations Agencies regarding their finance allocations should be submitted if not before, then at the next Permanent Forum meeting.

In concluding Mr. Chairman, while it is commendable for Individual Indigenous organizations and Peoples to offer resources to develop the Permanent Forum, this should be seen as in addition to and not as a substitute for our rightful resources and entitlements toward the Permanent Forum. When the billions of dollars of Indigenous natural wealth contributing to today's economies is taken account of, withholding sufficient assistance cannot be justified and words which describe such activity have been well articulated.

In concluding the Permanent Forum has been described as one of partnership, real partnership begins with understanding simple fundamentals, like freedom and equality as enshrined in Constitutions and common laws. Freedom means to express oneself as Indigenous and not as another would determine. Freedom to stand and be treated equally on the same level without having to adopt supplicatory or fawning mannerisms. Freedom to equal resources, not to suppress or apologize for ones Indigenous characteristics.

Our Pacific representative to the Permanent Forum, sister Mililani Trask epitomizes a characteristic known as *kanohi ki te kanohi*, face to face, no double speak. It is a quality we hold in high regard. Our sister laid us all a challenge in our development of partnership within the United Nations, and our brother Chief Matthew Coon Come stated the Permanent Forum must be more than a house of complaints. We should rise to these challenges and seize the opportunity those before us fought to offer, there is no other option, no going back to the old days of superior inferior, we have taken a giant step forward.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.