

**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**  
 May 16<sup>th</sup> to May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
 UN Headquarters, New York, NY  
**North American Indigenous Peoples Statement**

**Agenda Item 3 (a): Economic and Social Development**

Madam Chairman,

I bring you greetings from the Indigenous Peoples of North America.

The North American region is made up of two member states in the United Nations, Canada and the United States of America as well as several hundred Indigenous Nations. At the meeting of the North American Indigenous Peoples Caucus (NAIPC) in preparation of the UNPFII-10, participants expressed serious concerns that these member States of the region continue to ignore the United Nations' imperative to recognize and implement the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Despite being two of the richest countries in the developed world, Indigenous Peoples in these countries rank lowest on the quality of life indicators such as income, housing, health, and highest in suicide and incarceration rates.

We call upon the UNPFII and all United Nations mechanisms and agencies to immediately reform their mandates, missions and work statements to include within their programs all Indigenous Peoples, including those in developed countries.

Participants especially expressed concerns about national policies, programs, and practices based on racial and ethnic classification systems and laws which maintain assimilative and discriminatory social categories. These obstruct and violate the rights of Indigenous Nations to exercise economic and social development and their right to self-determination.

These issues are clearly articulated in the CPR 5 which is available to the Permanent Forum Members, States and all participants of this meeting. There are a number of recommendations that the Permanent Forum can take into consideration for their final report.

In this intervention, we would like to highlight some of our most serious concerns.

Our most important issue is the survival of our Peoples in a region where settler states have stolen our lands, denied us our natural resources, our treaties violated, and subjected us to various forms of genocide. In order to survive, we need the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in all areas including in the areas of economic and social development

We object to the States deciding who is Indigenous and who is not. The Creator decided to put us here in North America and States should not second guess the Creator. The Creator did not make Federally recognized tribes or status Indians. The Creator made Indigenous Peoples.

We resubmit the inclusion of a recommendation from 2009 for the UNPFII to create a Task Force on unrepresented and unrecognized Indigenous Peoples, to report to the PF in a future session.

Indigenous Peoples who are divided by borders are also an issue of a violation of our rights that are articulated in the Article 36 in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

NAIPC recommends that the UNPFII create an expert panel, including impacted Indigenous Peoples, to examine the violent impacts and consequences of borders, border walls, drones, border infrastructure, and militarization on Indigenous Peoples lands and the interruption of our economic, social and spiritual relations across borders.

We are concerned that the national security is being used as an excuse to continually reduce the rights of Indigenous Peoples. We are not the terrorists.

The NAIPC calls on the UNPFII to recommend to the governments of Canada and the U.S. to eliminate all assimilation policies that further exacerbate the economic, social and other disparities between Indigenous Peoples and the non-indigenous population.

We further recommend research of the historical and ongoing destructive impacts of member States of North America of policies and laws which impose constraints upon the exercise of self-determination and sovereignty by Indigenous Peoples and Nations.

Again I encourage the Permanent Forum members to read the North American Indigenous Peoples Caucus Report, CRP 5, to further understand the issues that we face and to consider the recommendations in that report.

Thank You, Madam Chairman