

Intervention to the Ninth Session of the

UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2010

Youth Caucus Statement - April 20, 2010

Agenda Item 3: Special Theme “Indigenous Peoples: development with culture and identity”

Good Morning Mr. Chairperson and our indigenous brothers and sisters from all over the world,

On behalf of the Indigenous Youth Caucus, I would like to draw your attention on several issues deeply concerned by us, the indigenous youth.

First, we firmly call for stronger and more effective measurements to protect the **rights of the Mother Earth**.

The language in place to support the protection and our right as protectors from the destruction of imposed development or any other impacts resulting from the exploitation of our homelands is only effective if it is upheld.

Mother Earth is a living person from whom we derive and for who sustains us. If the violations against Mother Earth continue, our unique and spiritual connection with her will be lost, taking with it cultures, languages and people so closely dependent on one another. False accusations have been imposed upon indigenous peoples in terms of deforestation, desertification, and the extinction of animals and fish. We shall not be blamed for keeping our traditional way of living. It is the forces of so-called “western development” that causes the relocation and displacement of indigenous peoples along with the dispossession of their territory. The money-oriented expansion and development by the dominant society is not by any means benefiting indigenous peoples or the environment. It is a serious concern that the destruction of our lands, loss of our languages, and violations of our rights is leading to ethnocide of some indigenous peoples.

In addition to man-made disasters, in the past months natural disasters have been tearing Mother Earth apart, destroying our homes and taking away precious lives. Many indigenous people were forced to relocate. When the reconstruction projects for the aftermath of the disasters are developed, the free, prior and informed consent must be implied. Indigenous

communities must be consulted. However, consultation must be substantive, culturally understandable, on equal footing and mean more than just a meeting between two entities. We cannot call it a Free, Prior and Informed Consent when a section of the Indigenous Peoples is co-opted and they speak on the colonizers behalf in the consultation. The reconstruction of Mother Earth without consent of Indigenous communities will impose second harm to the victims further destroying our cultures and identities.

Second, the meaning of “**self-determination**” should be further clarified.

To give substance and effect to Article 3, it is necessary that State governments provide a forum for indigenous decision-making in the law making process as provided for in article 4. A critical fact we shall emphasize is that only until Indigenous Peoples achieve the ability to exercise our own course of our future, there is no way our people can ensure that DEVELOPMENT with Culture and Identity can ever be realized and for too long indigenous people have been subject to Laws contrary to our customs and traditions. This has been the fight of our elders and will continue to be ours.

In conclusion, the Indigenous Youth Caucus respectively offers the following **recommendations**:

1. The adoption of the UNDRIP is only the first step. We urge the Forum to push for greater implementation without reservation. We call upon all governments to uphold their commitment to UNDRIP through the actual implementation of these rights as well as their practice.
2. We call upon UNDP and other UN agencies to implement the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent and Self-Determination in all of their own projects, including any climate mitigation or adaptation projects and to strengthen their role in influencing governments to not only create but to implement laws and policies that take into account the needs of indigenous peoples.
3. We urge governments to end the practice of undertaking development projects on the lands and territories of indigenous peoples, including plantations, hydropower dams, mines, etc. that are approved or implemented without the FPIC of the indigenous peoples. Forced evictions must be stopped and governments must respect the principle of self-determination. UN agencies and government must take urgent steps to end ethnocide of indigenous peoples
4. We urge governments to create measures that will help preserve culture in times of natural

disasters and forced relocation.