

**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fourteenth Session
New York, April 20 – 1 May 2015**

Agenda Item 4: Half-day discussion on the Pacific Region

Joint Intervention on behalf of the Participants in the Project Access Capacity Building program (Africa; Asia; Latin America and the Caribbean; North America and the Pacific) at the 14th Session of the UNPFII including the International Indian Treaty Council; Tribal Link; United Confederation of Taino People; Caribbean Amerindian Development Organization; Pacific Disability Forum; Akali Tange Association Papua New Guinea; Saniri Alifaru; Bangladesh Indigenous Women's Network; Dewan Adat Papua; Tamu Bauddha Sewa Samiti Nepal; and The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People

Presented by Ruth Senikula, Pacific Disability Forum.

Madam Chair, Indigenous brothers and sisters,

I have the honor to bring you this joint statement on behalf of the participants of the Project Access Global Capacity Training Program, this collective welcomes the agenda item and wishes to intervene this discussion with three key concerns.

On Indigenous persons with disabilities in the Pacific, we continue to witness discrimination and multiple barriers to participate in society, including access to education, employment, health care, communication and transportation services, we are overrepresented among those living in absolute poverty, and continue to exist as one of the world's most vulnerable populations.

We welcome the 2012 study conducted by this forum on Indigenous persons with disabilities, and encourage the forum to frequently reassess the Human Rights status of indigenous persons with disabilities.

We note the commitments enshrined in the World Conference outcome document, regarding indigenous persons with disabilities. This is a strong step forward in recognizing and promoting our rights.

However, the development of our rights cannot be taken without our full consultation and participation as reflected in Article 22 of the UN Declaration. Only an inclusive and empowered society will ensure that no one is left behind.

Madam Chair,

We are also gravely concerned that colonialism in the Pacific, in new and changing forms, has intensified, and lead to the increase of transmigration, militarization and desecration of sacred sites, with the situation on the Maunu Kea mountain in Hawai'i as the most recent example.

Even though Indigenous peoples of the Pacific have addressed human rights violation at the proper mechanisms, we are more than often told to forget the historical harm, whereas, a number of Indigenous Peoples are entitled to the right to the self-determination as reflected in Art 3 of the UN Declaration and the UN must take its responsibility into the decolonization of West Papua, South Maluku, Tokelau, Guam, Hawaii, American Samoa, Pitcairn and New Caledonia.

Throughout our region we see that colonization has become more violent, we just want peace and believe, that the only way to achieve this is through decolonization of our islands.

Madam Chair,

Indigenous peoples of the Pacific possess unique relationship with our land, waters and seas, and they have existed in harmony since time immemorial but witness transnational cooperation cause extensive damages to our lands, territories and resources. As we now see experimental seabed resource extraction destroying the seafloor of for example Fiji, and Papua New Guinea.

On this note we welcome the WCIP outcome document and the paragraphs directed at our right to free, prior and informed consent in terms of access to Lands Territories and Resources and form a halt to the rising sea level, climate crisis, and threatened our traditional knowledge and food sovereignty.

We therefore recommend the following:

Firstly, we call on the Permanent Forum to extend the study on indigenous persons with disabilities in the Pacific to determine the full enjoyment of their rights as indigenous individuals.

Secondly, we recommend the Permanent Forum to establish an Expert Group Meeting on Decolonization.

And finally, to ensure Indigenous meaningful participation in climate change processes.

Thank you Madam Chair,