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NATIVE AMERICAN COUNCIL (31)  
of New York City

Intervention Made by the Native American Council  
of New York City - Agenda Item 8  
July 25, 1993

by Tonya Gonnella Frichner, Esq.

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Madame Chairperson, I am speaking on behalf of the Native American Council of New York City. The Native American Council of New York City is a coalition of Native American organizations founded in 1990 at the request of the Traditional Circle of American Indian Elders and Youth to address the dominant culture's celebration of the quincentennial of Columbus' arrival in the Caribbean and the resulting immigration of millions of Europeans to our territories. The result of our efforts was an educational experience for all persons that essentially put a stop to the party and gave us the opportunity to reexamine history as taught by the dominant culture and a new approach to Indigenous peoples and issues.

Madame Chairperson, although New York City is not often thought of as a center for Indigenous peoples, there are more than 30,000 Indian people in New York City from over 50 different Indigenous nations from across our Great Turtle Island. The mandate of the Native American Council of New York City is to serve this large and diverse population. Part of that work is obviously to serve, whenever possible, our Indigenous brothers and sisters from around the world who come to New York to pursue our mutual international efforts. In December, 1992, surrounding the official opening ceremonies of the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations, the Native American Council of New York City sponsored three days of independent Indigenous delegates meetings by and for Indigenous Peoples.

Madame Chair, one of the elders that spoke at the United Nations on December 10th, 1992 in New York City was Thomas Banyaca of the Hopi Nation. His speech before the United Nations was in fulfillment of ancient Hopi prophecies. However, our understanding is that this was only the first step in the fulfillment of these prophecies which have serious implications for our survival. Accordingly, the Native American Council of New York City is requesting that the Hopi elders be again permitted to address a full session of the General Assembly. We believe that this could be done in conjunction with anticipated plans for a conclusion to the international year and, hopefully, the beginning of an International Decade.

Madame Chairperson, the Native American Council of New York City is seeking the support of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the Indigenous delegates gathered here for the XIth Session during this International Year. Madame Chair, we would like to be so bold as to suggest that this address be scheduled for the General Assembly on October 22, 1993 as a part of a celebration at the United Nations in New York commemorating the International Year. In the spirit of the theme of the Year, "a new partnership," we believe it is essential that that partnership be based on increased communications between all peoples and that the voice of Indigenous leaders be heard by the representatives of the world's nation states. An address to the General Assembly, in fulfillment of prophecies that many Indigenous People believe are sacred and essential, demonstrates the willingness of the United Nations to participate in the new partnership and continues the forum for a dialogue expressed as a hope for the International Year, the International Decade and a permanent place within the United Nations for Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you, Madame Chairperson.