

The Seventh Generation Fund and Te Karu o Te Ika Voyaging Trust

18th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)

22 April – 3 May 2019

Agenda Item 12: The outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Thankyou Madam Chair and we congratulate you on your election, and thank you for the opportunity to speak to Agenda item 12: The outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

For all Indigenous Peoples living under the pervasive shadow of a settler colonial government, living AS indigenous peoples demands of us a constant effort of dismantling and deconstructing the colonial fictions that saturate our worlds. These colonial fictions reiterate such narratives as: our invasion was invited, that it was beneficial to us and we should be thankful for it, that it brought us civilisation and peace, and that our own ancestral ways, including our languages, knowledge systems and protocols were backwards and irrelevant. A dominant roadblock to the protection of our Indigenous truths and knowledge is the space taken up by colonial fiction.

Madam Chair we wish to raise the issue of state funding of events, memorials to colonial invasion. While we go about the dismantling the colonial ideological structures that surround us, in order to implement national plans of action for UNDRIP or achieving outcomes of the World Conference, these national celebrations function to uphold colonial structures. In Aotearoa, the Crown has invested at least \$25millionNZD in the memorialization of the colonial invasion of Aotearoa. This is a system wide initiative that includes mainstream curriculum, culture and heritage, environmental initiatives and permanent signage. Indigenous efforts to insert our truths into these events should NOT be construed as consent, they are damage mitigation and it is clear that they will not be enough to stem the significant tide of mistruths which minimise or completely erase the massacres, abductions and torture which characterises colonial invasion.

This campaign sees the NZ Ministry of Education rolling out a nationwide curriculum that frames British Imperial expansion as “British Maritime Heritage” and perversely equates it to our own ancestral Polynesian Navigation. Our voyaging ancestors did NOT carry out an imperial project of expansion and extraction and to conflate these two issues paves a path for the erasure of colonial crime whilst also misrepresenting our own Indigenous historical accounts. It herocizes the colonial invasion of our oceanic

territory. While we celebrate and support the notion our Prime Minister's recent statements that white supremacist terrorists should not be named and memorialised, and our government's recent commitment to implement UNDRIP – we find that to be in DIRECT conflict with the \$25million government commitment to promote and memorialise James Cook's arrival and the inception of colonialism. This system-wide multimillion dollar campaign to memorialise colonial invaders is in direct conflict with any intention to achieve a systemwide action plan to realise the rights set out in the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, or to implement UNDRIP. It is a re-entrenchment of harmful colonial fictions in the hearts and minds of our populace, and a blanket regression in our path to self determination.

We have unsuccessfully lobbied both local and national governments against investing in these events and memorials for four years now. In particular we are concerned that these events are not restricted to Aotearoa New Zealand, this framework of celebration has already been replicated in Australia, and further afield, to memorialise Cook and disrupt our Indigenous truth about the arrival of colonization. We implore the forum to recognise how destructive it is to the promotion of Indigenous accounts when the states sponsor celebrations of colonial invasion, and call upon all states to cease the memorialization of colonial invaders.

Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples

Te Karu o Te Ika Voyaging Trust

Ka Lāhui Hawai'i