

INTERVENTION OF NA KOA IKAIKA O KA LAHUI HAWAI'I

Topic: Permanent Forum Agenda Item: #9
 Presenter: Mililani Trask

Thank you Mdm. Chair for allowing NA Koa Ikaika o Kalahui Hawaii to present this intervention on Agenda #9 - the Permanent forum. We support the concept of a permanent forum for indigenous peoples within the U.N. System. We thank the Working Group for their efforts in this area and we thank IWGIA for their excellent publication on this issue. We urge all states and Indigenous Peoples interested in this issue to obtain a copy of the IWGIA publication which contains the submissions of many indigenous peoples and nations on this topic.

Mdm. Chair, we have some reservations about this issue which we would like to present.

#1. The concept and effort to establish the permanent forum issued forth from the Vienna Conference on Human Rights. It was not intended to replace the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples and it should not be considered as a body which would in any way supplant this Working Group. The discussion on the Permanent Forum is still unfolding. We do not know with certainty what the actual mandate of the forum will be, how it will be comprised or where it will be situated within the U.N. System. We do know what mandate of this Working Group is and we know that all indigenous peoples can come here to set standards, present interventions on current developments, the Decade and other matters. We do not want to give up this forum for a promise that there will be a permanent forum, whether or not the U.N. System provides for a permanent forum - it is our position that this Working Group should be maintained under its current mandate.

#2. Several States, NGOs and indigenous peoples are recommending that indigenous representation in the permanent forum be based on the five

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geographical regions adopted by the United Nations. We ~~disagree~~ disagree.

The geographic regions adopted by the United Nations were established based on a western world view - the colonizers world view. Mdm Chair, the Pacific Basin is the largest region in the world, but the indigenous peoples of Oceania and the Pacific are not recognized as a geographic region by the U.N.

We ask States, NGO's and indigenous nations and delegates to support our request that a separate geographic category be acknowledged for Oceania and Pacifica. Culturally our peoples are part of the pacific basin. Our Hawaiian language, oral histories and cultural practices are akin to those of our Maori, Tongan, Fijian, Tahitian and Samoan cousins. Respect our cultural affiliations, make a place for us at the table of the permanent forum.