

**Retrieve Foundation
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Statement by Margaret Connolly
to the
Second Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
On
Agenda Item: Youth and Health

Dia Duit.

Dear Chairperson, Honorable Permanent Forum Members, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Ireland, Distinguished Delegates, and Indigenous People of Mother Earth. I thank you for this opportunity to address this forum on behalf of the Retrieve Foundation. I am Margaret Connolly, the ninth generation of the Ancient Celtic Clan known as the Indigenous Nine Fold, Keepers of the Ancient Wisdom and Knowledge.

The Retrieve Foundation was founded to promote and support our indigenous sacred Celtic Heritage, reconnecting our children and people to their traditions. We have survived colonization and neglect from the elected Government of Ireland. For two thousand years we have been forced to adapt to a culture that was foreign to us. Yet the Celtic people have already faced the test as to whether their spiritual traditions can exist outside their original framework. We have survived, although somewhat fragmented, without loss of respect. Today we ask for an acknowledgement of our existence under the Indigenous Charter by the government of Ireland. To this aim we ask for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous People to make a representation on our behalf.

Mr. Chairperson, people at the Retrieve Foundation have many Celtic gifts and walk the path of our ancient ancestors as teachers. They promote a deeper awareness and understanding of our Sacred Celtic Heritage. These indigenous traditions are not bound by territory or genetics.

Retrieve Foundation teaches ethical practices and provides our young people with a thorough grounding in all aspects of their chosen discipline so they may become ethical, competent, non-prejudiced, and successful citizens. Many young people are offered no opportunity to express their spiritual gifts or learn of their true life's purpose. In the current absence of cooperation and funding from the Irish government to expand our programs and heighten awareness we fear confusion and despair will continue. Last year there were over 280 suicides under the age of 30.

Drugs and alcohol are the tools of an oppressive society that has conditioned our people for two thousand years. Too many of our young people are on drugs, alcohol, and committing suicide. Suicide is the largest cause of death among our young people.

To secure a college to facilitate our teachings of the sacred Celtic Arts we seek the cooperation, support and acknowledgment of this authoritative forum. We ask for support and funding from our government as we are outside the network of conventional educational practices. Our foundation gives children and young people the sense of self-respect they need to create a positive future. Our success can be multiplied a hundred times more with the aid of the United Nations and Ireland.

Our children need to learn the ways of the ancient ones, it is their right to choose. The Retrieve Foundation connects children with many areas of life that could not be achieved through other educational systems. With the cooperation and willingness of the Irish government to use innate wisdom, we can be assured that they will act on our funding request, create an understanding of the ancient connection we have to the land, and gain insight to the ongoing conflict. The Celtic People can help create a permanent solution to the troubles of our lands. This forum's acknowledgment and authority will assure the cooperation of Ireland.

We urge the government of Ireland to dialogue and cooperate with us to change the ongoing political conflict and horrifying suicidal statistics that undermine our people's future. Let us remedy this with grace, hope, action, and an immediate acknowledgment by our government.

Gur a Mile a Maith Duit.

Margaret Connolly



Founder of the Retrieve Foundation of Indigenous Celtic Heritage

May 20, 2003



Retrieve Foundation
for the Healing Arts
founder: MARGARET Connolly