



International Indigenous Historical Society

Subsidiary Charter of

The Ethiopian World Federation, Incorporated

"In Consultative Status with the United Nations"

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Ollie McClean

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Seventh Session

New York, 21st April – May 2nd - 2008

Agenda Item 5: Human Rights: dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people and other special rapporteurs...Study on the structures, procedures and mechanisms that currently exist or that might be established to effectively address the human rights situation of indigenous peoples (E/C.19/2008/2)

Collective Recommendation submitted by the: Ethiopian World Federation, International Indigenous Historical Society, The Longhouse 1, Taitu Betul International University, Sankofa International Academy, Deborah Light of Israel, Survival For Life, Makeda's Remnant, Negus Internet Café and Learning Center and Taad-Yinga .

Special Theme: *Climate change, bio-cultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges.*

By: Ollie McClean

Madam Chairperson, members of the Permanent Forum, Panelist, Indigenous sisters and brother, ladies and gentlemen:

Topic: *"International Reciprocity and Antiquities, Regalia, Burial Grounds, Landmarks, Culture, resources and Traditions"*

For your information and for your immediate action please note: New Amsterdam awarded a 6.6 acres of land to the Afro-Indigenous People to bury their ancestors (dead).

From 1690 until 1790s, enslaved Afro-Indigenous People were buried in 6.6 acre burial ground in Lower Manhattan, New York. These burial grounds were desecrated with landfills and corporate developments. In 1991 - over 425

Remains of Afro-Indigenous People were dug up during the planned construction of a Federal Office Building (Duane @ Reade) on this grave site. This construction now rest on the sacred Burial Ground itself, along with other remains which were never excavated, beneath City Hall, The Supreme Court and other buildings now sanding atop the original 6.6 acre granted as the Negro Burial Ground, as it was then called.

The Committee of Descendants of African Ancestral Burial Ground, supported by New York City councilman Charles Barron, contends that all construction should be removed and that the space be returned to its originally agreed state of existence which is green, sacred and open with an appropriate marker befitting a cemetery and those buried within the original 6.6 acres.

It is a Human Right to have your family, friends and loved ones buried on sacred ground and within secured protected manner. It is dehumanizing for Non-Indigenous Peoples to assume the right to exemption and re-burying of Afro-Indigenous Peoples remains on their sacred grounds.

The authority to make this demand has precedence in laws of the United States Government, International Laws of Human Rights and Spiritually through Holy text and traditionally through rights of Afro-Indigenous People.

The Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) approved in 1990, has elements which apply to the African Burial Ground. From the Hopi tribe, we learn that the Act was intended to protect Native American Graves. Through exemption and testing of the remains – test have proven that these are Afro-Indigenous Peoples. Based on NAGPRA, the Federal Government cannot determine how to memorialize the gravesite. However, the General Services Administration (GSA) launched competitions of design and construction for the African Burial Ground and an elaborate structure now stands **on top of the sacred remains of our Ancestors**.

The NAGPRA clarifies the right of ownership to all indigenous people for their remains, artifacts-including funerary objects, religious artifacts and objects of cultural patrimony found on Federal or **tribal lands** and established conditions for excavation and reinternment.

These rights were withheld from the communities of Afro-Indigenous People. The bones of our ancestors have been disrespected, the graves desecrated, tradition dishonored and land pillaged for corporate gain throughout the United States of America, West Indies, Africa and all other places where you might find Afro-Indigenous sacred burial grounds. The communities of the world should condemn the unjust actions of the General Services Administration (GSA) and all other governmentally protected organizations that choose to

desecrate and pillaged the sacred lands and burial grounds of the Afro-Indigenous People.

We are here today to petition the United Nations to intercede and support the Descendants of those Afro-Indigenous Peoples that were captured at home and abroad, torn from their traditions, ripped from their culture and forced, against their human will, to work in a corporate system that physically enslaved them. Today we demand the removal of all unwanted, un-natural, non-traditional, non-cultural structure(s) that sit on the sites of our sacred Burial Grounds, Mounds and Sacred Lands.

Thank you,

Ollie McClean

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