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Daniel Rivera, Taino Nation of the Antilles
For the Caribbean Caucus
3rd Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Item 4 (d) Human Rights

Mr. Chairman,

500 years ago when the ships arrived on our shores, we welcomed the "arihuna" or strangers with open arms and open hearts as is our custom. We offered our hospitality and they took what was offered. They took and they took until they could take no more. Soon they began raping and killing our people. They killed for no apparent reason, and soon many of our began fleeing for their lives. Our people fled to the mountains and neighboring islands. Some even made an attempt to reach the land of our origins in South America. They took what we call the Arawak Trail down the island chain to Venezuela, and many settled there and in other islands. For this reason we have relatives in Guiana, Belize and other places throughout the Caribbean.

The Caribbean Caucus is very concerned about the lack of representation of many of our Amerindian (Arawak) family in this forum during the discussions of such important matters relating to Human Rights. Our voices have not been heard. We all need to hear the voices of our women and our grandmothers, for they are the guardians and purveyors of our language and culture. Our grandmothers also pass on the accumulative knowledge and wisdom of our people. We regret to inform you that our Caribbean sisters and brothers where not able to be hear with us today due to a lack of funds, we are very concerned that they are not represented in the Permanent Forum. We would therefore like to make the following recommendations to the Permanent Forum:

1. To request the ECOSOC to request that the Secretary General and the relevant United Nations bodies to expand the membership of the Permanent Forum to include a direct Indigenous Caribbean presence in the forum.
2. To request the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum in conjunction with the forum to organize a regional meeting in the Caribbean to address the issues of concern to the people of the

Universal

Caribbean.

3. To request UNESCO, UNICEF and relevant UN bodies organize a workshop to look at the cultures and preservation of the culture of the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean. To identify the areas of most concern in the individual communities such as the negative effects of forestry and forestry related development, mining and other extractive industries.

4. To request the World Health Organization to hold a meeting to address the effects of HIV / AIDS on the indigenous women and girls of the Caribbean.

5. To request ECOSOC to encourage governments to adopt or draft the Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2004.

6. To request ECOSOC to encourage governments to ratify and implement ILO convention 169 and other related international legal instruments directly relevant to Indigenous Peoples.

In conclusion we recommend adequate funding and technical support to carry out the recommendations of the Permanent Forum.

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak and wish the Permanent Forum a successful session.