

Wednesday 16 PM #072



Windows Live™ Hotmail

Pacific Caucus Statement

From: **Joshua Cooper** (joshua@hawaii.edu)
 Sent: Tue 5/15/07 8:10 PM
 To: pelpina ohorella (psahureka@hotmail.com)

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
 6th Session
 Agenda Item 3 Territories, Lands and Natural Resources

Joint Statement by the Pacific Caucus *by Pelpina SAHUREKA.*

Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (ALRM),
 National Native Title Council (NNTC),
 Menzies School of Health Research
 National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organization (NACCHO),
 Foundation for Aboriginal & Islander Research Action (FAIRA),
 Indigenous Law Center, University of New South Wales
 NSW Aboriginal Land Council
 Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), World Council of Churches (Australia),

Indigenous World Association, Waikiki Hawaii Civic Club,
 Na Koa I Kai Ka Kalahui Hawaii,
 Hioulaokalani Coalition, Hawaii Institute for Human Rights,
 Ka La Hui Hawaii, Peoples Tribal Council of West Papua,
 Bangsa Adat Alifuru of Maluku

The Pacific Region is the largest region in the world. Our sea of islands is our homeland stretching over one fourth of the world. The earth is our *sea,* foundation for our being and beliefs. Our land is mother earth. It is where we come from. Oceania is where we come from. Our islands are our responsibility. We are one with the land and sea.

Recommendations:

We propose an immediate moratorium of development projects proposed on indigenous peoples lands without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous community. Too often projects are deemed necessary based on economic, security and scientific purposes ignoring the human rights of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and natural resources.

We propose that military operations on indigenous lands cease in their destruction of sacred lands in the name of defense. We also call for an immediate cleanup process to be initiated by each nation so that the land can be cared for according to traditional values. We mobilize daily to make the vision of a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific a reality for the indigenous peoples of our region.

We propose that the Decolonization Committee continue its important efforts in our region to guarantee the right of self-determination to all indigenous peoples of the Pacific. The Committee of 24 should also host an expert meeting with the UN PFII to examine indigenous peoples that were once on the list of decolonization and were removed without the proper steps according to international law based on the UN Charter. We propose a series of roundtable discussions to examine the issues that could elaborate the possible next steps to guarantee the right of self-determination in the Pacific.

We believe Madam Erica-Irene A. Daes' pioneer studies of Indigenous Peoples and Their Relationship to Land and Indigenous Peoples Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources as well as the Report of the Expert Seminar on Indigenous Peoples' Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources and their Relationship to Land should be included in the report of the current session of the UN PFII.

We call upon all states of the region but also every member-state of the UN General Assembly to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples before the conclusion of the 61st session. A schedule should be established before the end of the UN PFII so indigenous peoples can properly participate in the decision-making process as partners.

We will now share some examples of the reasons why the articles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples must be recognized and realized in the daily lives of indigenous peoples in the Pacific.

We will begin with one success where the Kanaka Maoli voice challenged the corporate system of commodifying the culture was thwarted. Recently in Hawaii and elsewhere throughout the Pacific, indigenous peoples have become more and more concerned about biotechnology and the genetic modification of our native foods including our taro, our elder brother. Not only do researchers want to genetically modify our taro but they also want to own it. For example, the University of Hawaii (UH) took out three(3) patents on a cross hybrid between a Palauan and a Hawaiian taro. This kind of privatization of our resources has created a crisis in our homeland where the indigenous peoples of Hawaii protested against the private ownership of our genetic resources. Kanaka Maoli demanded that UH withdraw the patents to the taro and return it to the guardians for benefit to all. UH finally agreed to terminate the plant patents after a loud outcry from the peoples of Hawaii. Unfortunately, this year a bill in the Hawaii State Legislature was not passed that would create a moratorium on genetic modification of taro.

Concerning recommendation number one, an important recent development relating to development is the proposal of an Advanced Technology Solar Telescope on Haleakala on Maui. The proposed scientific development is huge towering at 14 stories and intrusive on one of the most sacred sites in Hawaii. The tallest building on the island of Maui would cause an irrevocable loss of cultural, spiritual and environmental resources. The top of the proposed telescope would tower 100 feet higher than the summit with the base being dug into the sacred earth five stories deep.

There must be a comprehensive use plan to allow Kanaka Maoli and citizens to provide input. So far, most of the articles in the DRIP are being

violated with the current practices being carried out in the name of science, development and progress.

To continue with this project would destroy an integral part of our identity and devastate future generations. Indigenous cultures throughout the world recognize nature as sacred. Haleakalā is noted throughout our region of Oceania as one of the most sacred area. There are stories, legends, events, but most importantly, prayers by generations of cultural practitioners. As many visitors can testify there is a life force within these rocks that have influenced their lives. For the National Science Foundation, and scientists to belittle this belief, they unknowingly contribute to the genocidal practice of wiping out the people of Aloha.

Concerning the second recommendation, we are concerned with the live ammunition training at Makua Valley. We are alarmed and demand the withdraw of the stryker brigade in Hawaii. We demand a study to test for depleted uranium in the soil of Hawaii due to military training on sacred sites. We also demand an immediate cleanup of dumped ammunition in the waters of Waianae, where many indigenous peoples still catch fish to provide basic nutrition for their people. Also, we support the next steps toward recognizing Kaho'olawe and Northwestern Hawaii islands as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site.

Concerning Maluku, the original inhabitants of Maluku people plead for the return of their indigenous name AlifUru. Dutch colonialism forbade the name to be used because it was considered too cannibalistic. The AlifUrus are Melanesian from origin and seek their place within the Pacific and want to be officially recorded as such. Occupying Indonesian forces are claiming ancestral grounds for their military purposes. The people of Skip in Ambon are losing through lawsuits their ancestral grounds to Indonesian military. Hundreds of thousands of transmigrates from Java were sent to Maluku and these Javanese settlers are given land titles of AlifUru grounds while the official landowners are being chased away. Protesters are being called separatists RMS. With the coming of these new settlers the rainforests are being forcibly transformed into palm and rice plantations, with the consequence of leaving the Alifurus in poverty, no land and no identity.

WEST PAPUA

Indonesia still ignores and negates the identity of the people of West Papua despite of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples. Papuans are of the Melanesian race and belong also to the Pacific region. Indonesian military are claiming our ancestral lands. As is the case in Manukwari, Biak Nunfor, Serui, Sorong. Everywhere in Papua, the people are being chased away, and their homes destroyed.

In conclusion, we insist that governments adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that recognizes the spiritual relationship between indigenous peoples and the earth. The DRIP outlines the rights for indigenous peoples to perpetuate the sacred bond of kinship with the land. We strive to bring the articles alive by returning balance between humanity and the earth.

(Please print out and also add a couple of names that I just received.)