

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection of
Minorities
Working Group on Indigenous Populations

Geneva, Switzerland
3-7 August 1987

WGIP 87/OCÉ.AUS/3

A submission made by the New South Wales Aboriginal
Land Council

Madam Chair

The Indigenous People's Preparatory Meeting last week discussed the question of the Australian Bicentenary Celebrations. The Meeting authorised me to transmit to the Working Group the following Resolution: *unanimously adopted, we request that the U.N. annul the Resolution to SA BARRI*
The Preparatory Meeting recognises that in 1788 the British Colonial forces brutally invaded the Aboriginal people's territory in what is now known as Australia

The invasion led to dislocation, dispersal and dispossession of Aboriginal people.

The Meeting further recognises that Aboriginal people have never ceded or relinquished their Sovereignty.

Accordingly the Meeting joins in solidarity with Aboriginal people in declaring 1988 a year of mourning.

Furthermore the Meeting rejects the Bicentennial Celebrations.

The Indigenous Preparatory Meeting through its Resolution on the I.L.O. Revision Process expressed its concern about that process.

We requested, among other things, that the Working Group have a thorough discussion about the matter and include it on the 1988 Agenda.

In particular, our organisation wishes to focus the Working Group's attention on the Self-determination question raised in Point 1 of our resolution, and I quote : e/

'A number of the proposed articles are inconsistent with the exercise of the right to self-determination by Aboriginal peoples.'

The International Labour Office has made it abundantly clear, both in published documents and public oral statements that the I.L.O. has no intention whatsoever of basing the Revision on even the theme of self-determination. The 'Indigenous peoples' position, as noted by the Committee of Experts in conclusion 9 of their report:

~~The Meeting noted~~ that the Indigenous and Tribal representatives unanimously stressed the importance of self-determination in Economic, Social and Cultural Affairs as a right and as a basic principle for the development of new standards within the I.L. O.

The proposed Revision, as implied by the questionnaire will fail to conform to currently evolving principles of Indigenous rights

Like our brothers and sisters from the Six Nations Confederacy we believe that Indigenous Nations should have Sovereign control over their own territory and destiny.

The Working Group should view, with concern, as we do, the I.L.O.'s backward step in the Standard Setting process. We question whether the I.L.O. is an appropriate body to develop International standards relating to Indigenous Peoples, nevertheless as the Preparatory Meeting unanimously concluded, the proposed Revision is grossly inadequate.

Our emerging understanding of the I.L.O. process of Revision alarms us.

We believe that the Indigenous viewpoint may well be overwhelmed, we repeat our request that the Working Group communicate a strong message of concern.

May I express to the Chair and members of the Working Group my gratitude for your patience during this week.