



Tel: (212) 949-0853
Fax: (212) 661-0979

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
800 Second Avenue, Suite 400H
New York, N.Y. 10017

STATEMENT BY

H.E. MR. CRISPIN S. GREGOIRE

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

TO

THE THIRD SESSION OF THE
UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

ON AGENDA ITEM: FUTURE OF THE PERMANENT FORUM
ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

NEW YORK, MAY 20, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson:

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica is appreciative of this opportunity to participate in the Third Annual session and to make a short intervention on the future of the Permanent Forum.

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica is a strong supporter of Indigenous peoples right to participate in the United Nations process and to have international laws and standards applied to them in an equal and just manner. We applaud the Permanent Forum for this year's focus on the challenges faced by Indigenous Women.

We believe that important progress was made during the International Decade of Indigenous People, and the Permanent Forum is characteristic of one of its most important outcomes. A solid foundation has been laid and our challenge in the coming years is to ensure that the aspirations of the world's indigenous people become institutionalized in the international community.

My delegation wishes to make the following recommendations to the Permanent Forum:

1. Passage of the Declaration on the Rights of the World's Indigenous Peoples, as drafted in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, must be accorded high priority in the next phase of work of the Permanent Forum.
2. Continuation of the efforts of the Inter-sessional Working Group on the Draft Declaration with the full and equal participation of Indigenous nations, peoples and organizations will be critical in arriving at an acceptable Declaration.
3. The efforts of the Working Group on Indigenous Issues should be continued as this body can play a critical role in establishing standards for the application of Indigenous Peoples rights. Avoidance of duplication of efforts, a concern of many nation states, can be addressed through a clearly defined and fully supported mandate of the Working Group.
4. The Permanent Forum work should closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in:
 - (a) organizing regional seminars at the end of the Decade to evaluate the impact of the Decade, leading thereby to recommendations for future action; and

(b) revisiting the recommendation calling for the Secretary General to proclaim a Second Decade, which has now gained momentum.

With regard to the specific work of the Permanent Forum, we respectfully request that ECOSOC:

5. Consider adequate funding for the Permanent Forum so that it can more effectively implement the recommendations of its various sessions, including the strengthening of its monitoring and evaluation capacities;

6. Support the Permanent Forum's efforts to consolidate coordination with the various UN bodies, including UN regional bodies, with regard to policymaking and implementation of recommendations relating to Indigenous Peoples;

7. Consider expansion of the Permanent Forum's mandate to address unresolved arenas such as Governance, Treaties and International Agreements.

Finally, we encourage member states to continue their support of the various voluntary funds that make much of the work of Indigenous Peoples within the United Nations system possible. The increasing contribution of Indigenous Peoples to our work, the sharing of their ancient wisdom, and their inherent understanding of the democratic principles upon which the United Nations is founded is a valuable asset for all of us. It must be encouraged and preserved.

Thank you for your attention.