

HAUDENOSAUNEE DELEGATION

Xlth Session ♦ Working Group on Indigenous Populations

July 21, 1993

Intervention on Behalf of the Haudenosaunee Delegation Made
By Oren R. Lyons - 21 July 1993

Madame Daes, the United Nations has dedicated itself to the prevention of discrimination and the elimination of racism. It is unacceptable that Indigenous Peoples be treated any differently from all other peoples of the world in relation to our fundamental rights. In particular, the right to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples must be clearly affirmed without any qualification. To do otherwise would ratify the racism that our Peoples have endured for centuries.

Madame Chairperson, We commend the Working Group for moving the debate forward. In the final analysis, however, no meaningful advance will be made without recognition of our right to self-determination on the basis of the equality of peoples. Any other approach will result in continuing vulnerability to state practices that interfere with our societies and nations and violate our rights.

Madame Daes, the international community has spoken clearly in common article I of the international human rights covenants. It is the position of the Haudenosaunee that the right to self-determination should be the first article of the Declaration and should closely reflect the universal character of the covenants. We are pleased that our statement is consistent with the statement presented from the Indigenous Plenary sessions of 19 and 20 July 1993.

We recommend the following language:

"Indigenous Peoples have the right to self-determination, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status, and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

Language in the Declaration should be simple, comprehensive and direct clarifying the intent of the document to recognize Indigenous Peoples and Nations as equals in the world community.

We also have concerns with operative articles that relate to the practice of self-determination that we will raise when these articles are under consideration.

We urge the Working Group and the Indigenous delegates and member states participating in this session to move deliberately in the process of finalizing the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We have invested sixteen years work and human capital in the development of the standards we address today.

We are versed in endurance and are prepared to continue the discussion for however long it takes until we are satisfied that the Declaration fulfills the purpose and mandate of this Working Group, member states and Indigenous Peoples gathered here. Thank you Madame Chairperson.

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