

Twelfth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on  
Indigenous Issues - May 20-31, 2013 - New York City

Intervention of the Hawaii Caucus

Item 3 with special reference to the Report of the international expert group meeting:  
Indigenous youth, identity, challenges and hope: articles 14, 17 21 and 25 of the United  
Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (E/C.19/2013/3).

Endorsed by

Kalāhūi Hawaii, Ka Lei Papahio Kakūhihewa,  
Ke Ala O Ka Piko, Ke Kahua o Kualii  
Kukuio Kane, Paepae o Heeia, Papakūpuka  
UN KAMAKAKŪ

Written by Maile Taualii (mtaualii@papaolalokahi.org)

Aloha mai kakou. My name is Maile Taualii, and I come from the land of Kānaloa,  
O'ahu in the Hawaiian Islands.

I would like to recognize the Haudenosaunee, the people of this land, Chairman High  
Chief Edward John, and members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. I bring  
greetings from my ancestors. Aloha!

The Hawai'i Caucus strongly endorses the UN PFII **Analysis of health, education, and  
culture [E/C.19/2013/19]**. It is a comprehensive review of the challenges faced by  
Indigenous Peoples and the strategies that have been employed in the area of Indigenous  
Health.

However, there remain a number of issues that need of additional attention and a  
heightened response. We have 3 recommendations regarding the health of Indigenous  
Hawaiians:

1. We recommend the World Health Organization perform a full investigation of the  
violations of the United States against its own Standards for the Classification of  
Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity which continue to colonize Indigenous  
Hawaiians through invisibility in public data.
2. We recommend that a study be conducted by the World Health Organization to  
examine the violations of Indigenous Hawaiian rights regarding the collection,  
storage and patenting of biological material.
3. The Hawai'i Caucus unequivocally supports the Pacific Declaration of the  
Preparatory Meeting for Pacific Indigenous Peoples on the World Indigenous

Peoples 2014, which was held on March 19-21, 2013, in Redfern, Sydney, Australia.

The Pacific Declaration is in accordance with Resolution A/RES/65/198 of the United Nations General Assembly on 3 March 2011, to organize a high level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) to be held in 2014, to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, including those acknowledged in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as pursuant to Resolution A/66/L.61 of the United Nations General Assembly on 17 September 2012, that the WCIP shall result in a concise action-oriented outcome document taking into account the views emerging from preparatory processes through informal interactive hearings and inclusive and open informal consultations among and between member states and indigenous peoples.

4. Finally, Mr. Chair, the Hawaii delegation is very pleased that the UN General Assembly voted on Friday, May 17, 2013 to add French Polynesia to its list of territories that should be decolonized, affirming the right of the islands' inhabitants (TaataMaohi) to "self-determination and independence" in accordance with [A/67/L.56/Rev.1]. Our delegation calls upon the Permanent Forum and the UN General Assembly to also support Hawaii's right to be re-inscribed onto the list of non-self-governing territories. Furthermore, we call upon the US government to facilitate an expeditious process towards self-determination for indigenous Hawaiians.

#### **Health Status of Native Hawaiians**

Hawai'i's Indigenous Peoples suffer some of the worst health disparities and socioeconomic status compared to other populations residing in the State. Indigenous Hawaiians live 13 years less than those with greatest life expectancy<sup>i</sup> and have a higher infant mortality rate, which is more than twice that of Caucasians (7.9 versus 3.5 per 1,000 live births)<sup>ii</sup>. Significant contributors to the infant mortality disparity are education, age and smoking; all of which could be improved with education and support services. Cardiovascular disease mortality is double and diabetes related mortality is three times higher than Caucasians.<sup>iii</sup>

#### ***Violations by the United States with Respect to Forced Invisibility in Public Data***

In the **Analysis of Health, Education, and Culture, section II, A. Health, #24** there is a clear need for improved data in all aspects of health. There is recognition that data are imperative for programs, services, monitoring and reporting. It is also clear that despite recommendations to address the need, there remain major barriers.

This is especially true for Indigenous Hawaiians. While the disaggregation of Indigenous Hawaiian data is a federal mandate, it is not enforced or upheld by government agencies. This refusal to adhere to the federal reporting requirements has a crippling effect on

Indigenous Hawaiians, preventing the recognition of population disparities and preventing communities from advocating on their own behalf. Limited population data results in the inability to educate policy makers, which impacts resources allocation for research grants and programs, thus stifling the ability to change and improve the situation.

### ***Violations regarding the collection, storage and patenting of biological material***

A uniquely homogenous genotype, combined with disproportional rates of diseases, such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease, make Indigenous Hawaiians the target of many genetic research studies and biobanking efforts. Indigenous Hawaiian organizations have responded to a number of attempts to accrue Indigenous Hawaiians in genetic research by issuing moratoriums until full and informed consent can occur. Despite efforts to cease genetic research or storage of tissue, researchers continue to recruit Indigenous Hawaiians for their tissue to be used in biomedical research projects. As bio-repositories build their collection of Indigenous Hawaiian samples, it is critical to outline expectations of culturally appropriate and ethical research behavior in these areas.

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<sup>1</sup>Park, Braun, Horiuchi, Tottori, Onaka. Longevity Disparities in Multiethnic Hawaii: An Analysis of 2000 Life Tables. Public Health Reports 2009, Vol 24.

<sup>11</sup>Schempf, AH, Hayes, DK, Taulii, MM, Singh, GP, Fuddy, LJ. Excess Infant Mortality among Native Hawaiians: Identifying Determinants for Preventive Action. American Journal of Public Health (In Press)

<sup>111</sup>Mau, M. K., Sinclair, K., Saito, E. P., Baumhofer, K.N., & Kaholokula, J. K. (2009). Cardiometabolic Health Disparities in Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders. *Epidemiologic Reviews*, 31, 113–129.