

**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)  
20<sup>th</sup> Session, 19-30 April, 2021**

***Agenda Item 5 (D): Human rights dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples***

***Statement by the International Indian Treaty Council***

Thank you Mr. Vice Chair. The IITC, Yaqui Nation Cultural leaders and Traditional Authorities once again thank the EMRIP for its very significant and successful country engagement which brought us together with the Swedish Museums of World Culture to achieve their commitment for the repatriation of our sacred Maaso Kova. Although the pandemic has caused a delay, we trust that this will be carried out soon. We also thank the Swedish, Mexican and Sami governments for their support in bringing about this long-awaited spiritual healing. The EMRIP's engagement produced advances for other Indigenous Peoples engaged in repatriation efforts as well, notably the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' own laws governing the use and treatment of our sacred items in accordance with Article 11 of the UN Declaration.

We also express our appreciation for the work of Special Rapporteur Francisco Cali Tzay who began his mandate in May 2020 just as the COVID 19 pandemic was reaching its greatest impacts in our Nations and communities. We thank him for his study on the pandemic's impacts on Indigenous Peoples' rights and we encourage States to implement his recommendations for the direct participation of Indigenous Peoples in developing relevant policies and practices.

We also thank him for his response to IITC's 2020 urgent action regarding Human Rights Defender Nick Tilsen and ongoing Treaty Violations in Oceti Sakowin Territory, South Dakota USA. We happily report that the charges were dropped against Mr. Tilsen. However the Rapporteurs' call for a bi-lateral process to resolve Treaty violations has not yet been implemented by the US. We conclude by asking the Rapporteur if he plans a follow-up study related to COVID-19, and when he plans to launch the greatly anticipated study on Indigenous Peoples' Right to Water. Thank you.