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11th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
May 7 – 18, 2012
United Nations Headquarters in New York City

Pacific Caucus Intervention

Item #7

Half-day discussion on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Speaker: Lawrence Keali'i'olu'olu Gora

1. We acknowledge that the WCIP is a major opportunity to not only begin a truly constructive dialogue between Indigenous Peoples and States, but to begin to accelerate the formal implementation of the DRIP. Conversely, the associated risk is that States will destroy Indigenous Peoples' interest and desire in participating in the WCIP if it is not organised rightly - that is, if it is not organised consistent with internationally-recognised standards which the UN Member States have themselves endorsed as worthy of implementation. Such standards include:

- i. Those contained in the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly those that would ensure that we ask the following; that the issues, the process and format be open and inclusive in allowing Indigenous Peoples' direct, equal and full participation in all aspects of the Conference, both of process and substance. We acknowledge that we are working together in creating the modalities of the conference, the goals that can be contemplated and the formation of the agenda. We therefore request that the organizers pay special attention to Indigenous priorities in this regard;
- ii. Inclusivity of Indigenous communities, especially those communities who do not have access to normal channels of the establishment;
- iii. Obtaining the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples regarding all decisions that have the potential to impact our responsibilities and our human rights in any way.

Positive outcomes will best be served by Indigenous Peoples having an equal say in all aspects of the Conference. We acknowledge that we are working together in creating the modalities of the conference and request that the organizers pay special attention to Indigenous priorities.

Special note to be taken to include all parts of the Indigenous communities and especially those communities who do not have access to normal channels of the establishment.

The name of this conference should also accurately reflect what the event is about that what is currently proposed is a UN State Conference on Indigenous Issues. This, taking into account the plenary nature and high levels talks anticipated to happen in Norway, and the associated modalities that presently constrain the UN from realising the standards referred to in para 1. above. This will make more clear what goals can be contemplated and guide the formation of the agenda. We look forward, however, to the situation aligning correctly so that the conference name may be amended to reflect its nature as a true World Conference on Indigenous Issues.

In addition, including a referencing to prior work of the Permanent Forum and the compelling issues expressed there, such as this year's theme of Doctrine of discovery and De-colonialisation, should be referenced to and reflected in the WCIP's agenda. We further recommend that the Doctrine of Discovery will be our guideline and the issue of De-colonialisation be a major theme and future work of the Permanent Forum. More themes might include:

1. The third decade of Indigenous peoples;
2. The creation of institutions to address mechanisms to implement the UN Declaration;
3. Funding opportunities to ensure representatives come from under-represented populations;
4. Implementation of the UN Declaration to secure land rights and self-determination;
5. How to create free and open dialogue about the status of Indigenous Peoples with States;
6. To address the emergency situation of low lying Islands in the Pacific as to modalities of their survival;
7. How to promote health equity;
8. To effectively preserve land and water by ending devastation and commercial exploration and respect the peoples with their ancestral heritage who living on these grounds.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for allowing the Pacific Caucus to intervene on this important agenda item, World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.