



# HAUDENOSAUNEE

MOHAWK · ONEIDA · ONONDAGA · CAYUGA · SENECA · TUSCARORA

Commission on Human Rights

Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

Working Group on Indigenous Populations

Seventeenth Session

26 – 30 July 1999

doCip  
ARCHIVES

Agenda Item 5: Principal theme: Indigenous Peoples and their Relationship to land  
Intervention of the Haudenosaunee presented by Chief Oren Lyons

Madam Daes, Chairperson:

Recalling the Commission of Human Rights decision of 1997/114 (11 April 1997) and Economic and Social Council decision 1997/289 (July 1997) endorsing the appointment of Ms. Erica Daes as Special Rapporteur to prepare a working paper resulting in Sub-Commission Resolution 1997/12, "the study of Indigenous land rights" (22 August 1997), we add:

It has been said by our people that spirituality is the highest form of politics, including land and life. Our relationship to land goes beyond fee simple absolute. The title to our lands lies in the hands of our future generations. Our responsibility here is to protect their interests.

The Draft Declaration on the rights of the World's Indigenous Peoples as agreed upon by the members of the Working Group at its 11<sup>th</sup> Session, 1993, was prepared by us as a visionary statement on our rights as Indigenous peoples, including our right to sovereignty over our lands. The preamble, articles 7, 10, 12, 25, 26, 27, 30, and 31 of the Draft Declaration all refer to various aspects of land rights including the right not to be subjected to ethnocide and cultural genocide. Recognizing the exclusion of Indigenous peoples from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Assembly Resolution 217A(III, adopted 10 December 1948) we responded by combining our efforts to develop our own visionary declaration of our collective and human rights.

We, the Indigenous peoples, call the Earth our Mother. And using Respect as a law our generations of peoples have maintained a constant and fruitful, relationship with the Earth. Our law demands that ownership is in the hands of the 7<sup>th</sup> Generation coming. Therefore, we must maintain and secure land and life for future generations. Consistent with this mandate, then, is our effort to secure international recognition for the standards in the draft declaration. We urge the member states to secure to the Indigenous peoples of the world the same basic rights accorded to yourselves as set forth in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that we work together to ensure that these rights be recognized and protected for future generations.

WGIP 99/NAM.USA/12