



The Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations



Anglican Consultative Council

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Anglican Observer

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1 st session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Provisional agenda item 5 "General Statements"

Statement by Mr. Malcolm Naea Chun
Secretary-General of the Anglican Indigenous Network
Anglican Consultative Council



My greetings and blessing to you, Mr. Magga, to the members of the forum and to all gathered here during this historical event.

Also my deepest regret and apologies having to depart to attend meetings of our Network and the Indigenous Theological Training Institute in Toronto.

At our last meeting, the 7th gathering of the Anglican Indigenous Network, on September 20, 2001, held in Cairns, Australia, a resolution was made strongly supporting the Gwich'in nation in their struggle against Arctic oil exploration and drilling. We proclaimed that, "it is inexcusable to extinguish the livelihood of a people."

As First Peoples we are not only the indigenous peoples of our land; we are also the first to be exploited, to be expedient, and to be conveniently forgotten. In venues, like this, we are usually the afterthought and the underfunded. Nonetheless, this forum is a gift from the world to us and in the spirit of the Maori proverb, "Hoki mai te taonga; hoatu te taonga – A gift received is one returned" as called for by the High Commissioner, may I offer this:

A primary concern is the imminent demise of our cultures, languages, lands and existence as distinct peoples. We are particularly concerned that world leaders can declare wars and conflicts that victimize indigenous and tribal peoples. In this regard, is it not possible that the world leadership can also declare regions of refuge and peace, what we call pu'uhonua – places of refuge." They have historically existed from the hills of Judea, to the Cathedrals of Europe and to the lava rock fields and shores of the Hawaiian Islands, and like First Peoples and our traditions, they have been forgotten by many.

These places of refuge were where women, children and the elderly could flee for temporary and secure refuge from conflict. Is it not possible that such indigenous and tribal wisdom be practiced once again to help this world survive?

During the decades of indigenous peoples and of peace, is it not possible, beyond studies, for an actual declaration and designation of such places across the globe?

Let me close Mr. Magga, by adding that we at AIN are all too well acquainted with what it means to gather up the crumbs from the altar table to sustain ourselves. Our Communion's donation to support this forum, given by the Anglican Observer to the United Nations, is a sharing of one of those precious crumbs.

We will always keep you, the members of the forum and all gathered here in our daily prayers and thoughts, deep and close in our hearts, and upon our lips shall proclaim the greatness of the good news of your works.

May the peace and love of God, the compassionate, merciful and healing One, that goes beyond all human understanding, be with you now and forever.