

Item 8

PF17 Henrietta Mann 083

**Intervention to the Sixteenth Session of the
United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

Special Theme: "Tenth Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of
Indigenous Peoples: measures taken to implement the Declaration".

April 24 – May 5, 2017

Esteemed and beloved relatives. My name is, Ho'e-ost'oo'nah'e which in my Southern Cheyenne language means, The Woman Who Comes to Offer Prayer. I am also known as Dr. Henrietta Mann. Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity of addressing the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Please allow me to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair, and extend my greetings to each of the esteemed members of the Forum. I am pleased and honored to address all of you today and this entire body, regarding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

I am the Chairperson of the Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, a non-governmental organization that, with our many partners from throughout the Indigenous world, are here to speak about the accomplishments and the challenges of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We know that this document took many decades to formulate, and today stands as a monument to the Indigenous intellect and spirit, and of our responsibilities and our rights. However, it could have been relegated to a post note in history had it not been adopted by the UN General Assembly of the United Nations a decade ago.

I believe we are assembled to assess the effectiveness of this worldwide human rights instrument, and I assume you also all want to hear the truth. That's what I am here to share.

It is a challenge ... Especially for Indigenous Peoples.

Thankfully Indigenous Peoples are blessed by having been born Indigenous. The Creator, known by many different names, placed Indigenous Peoples in our respective homelands, with all our natural resources including minerals into our compassionate care at the beginning of time. We are the Original Peoples of our homelands and we have responsibilities, and we have inherent rights.

Absolutely nothing can change those facts.

The rights of Indigenous Peoples over our lands and our territories, as noted in Article 32, and expressed throughout the Declaration, clearly articulates that member states shall work cooperatively and respectfully, in good faith with Indigenous Peoples, and that they must secure our Nations' Free, Prior and Informed Consent before any development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources is initiated on our lands and territories. This right of Free, Prior and Informed Consent, as embodied in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a right of self-determination.

It recognizes our rights and responsibilities to defend and protect the SACRED.
WATER

1. Let me explain to you very quickly the reason why Water is Sacred. For nine months after each one of us was conceived we were:

PROTECTED
CHERISHED
NOURISHED
BLESSED

By the womb waters of our Mother.

The birth of a child explains the sacredness of Life. This also explains the sacredness of woman.

We are also made of:

EARTH
AIR
FIRE

We as human beings were given all the Natural World's abundant gifts, minerals and other elements in this world by which to live.

We, as human beings, were given the responsibility of being the stewards of this good Earth in which we were placed to live, a responsibility which continues to exist today. Thus, it is imperative that member-states considering any development projects, MUST seek to obtain the impacted Indigenous Peoples' Free, Prior and Informed Consent before any project is moved forward. This remains a challenge that too many Indigenous Nations and Peoples are confronted with throughout the world. The full actualization of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples can only be realized by the recognition of our right of self-determination. And, such a right also means that our Peoples retain the to say no to that development because we are thinking of the well being of our future generations, and of our first Mother, the Earth.

Thank you.