

Karu o Te Ika Voyaging Trust

17 April 2018

Members of the Permanent Forum, Mdm Secretary, thank you for the opportunity to address you today. With great gratitude to the peoples of Lenapehoking, and greetings to our Indigenous brothers and sisters, we wish to acknowledge the importance of the themes of Indigenous Lands, Resources, Territories and Human Rights.

Before I begin – I wish to acknowledge, in this past year, the passing of one of the founding voices of the Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Nganeko Minhinnick. From 1988 Nganeko attended the UN in pursuit of her and our, rights and it's through the strength of her generation we find ourselves here today. Nō reira e Ngāneko – he mihi tēnei nō te marae ātea o nga iwi taketake o te ao kia koe – nāhau i hiki, mā mātou e kawē, tēnā, e te māreikura, okioki atu i te taha a o tātou tīpuna.

Our submission focusses very specifically upon the Doctrine of Discovery, and it's continued maintenance by member state governments which manifests through state sponsored celebrations of indigenous land invasion.

Our recommendations are that The Permanent Forum:

1. Reiterate that the Discovery Doctrine as the basis for the assertion of authority and control over the lives of indigenous peoples and their lands, territories and resources.
2. The Permanent Forum calls upon member states to cease celebrations of colonial invasions on the basis that the celebrations advocate the superiority of the colonial forces and as such are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust.

In 2012 The Permanent Forum called upon States to repudiate the Discovery Doctrine as the basis for denying indigenous peoples' human rights. The purpose of that recommendation was to reaffirm not just the Forum's opposition to the Doctrine itself but the fact that it clearly infringed the right of self determination which vests in all Indigenous Peoples". We note that in many parts of the world, colonial invaders and oppressors have been de-memorialised and stand in solidarity with the replacement of Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day, we stand in solidarity with the reframing of Cook's arrival in Australia as an invasion.

We honour the grassroots movements that have achieved success in those areas, and acknowledge their bravery in often having to physically dismantle the colonial monuments which continue to represent and perpetuate that oppression. Yet in doing so we also wish to record our dismay and frustration that the NZ Government is now committed to celebrating that same oppression with a \$13 million programme to 'commemorate' the alleged discovery of our land by James Cook in 1769. The programme will not only effectively validate the Doctrine of Discovery but will also continue the long silencing or minimising of the dispossession, genocide and abuse of the human rights of Maori which followed. It also worryingly establishes a template for similar 'commemorations' as other governments also seek to legitimise Cook's "discoveries" across the Pacific. It is our submission that such commemorations are themselves contrary to the Declaration as well as an ongoing affront to those Indigenous Peoples still dealing with the trauma initiated by Cook's voyages and the consequent colonisation which they set in train".

We therefore echo the recommendation of the Global Indigenous People's Caucus that all states discontinue the memorialization of colonial invaders.