

INDIAN LAW RESOURCE CENTER

CENTRO DE RECURSOS JURÍDICOS PARA LOS PUEBLOS INDÍGENAS

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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL 24TH SESSION HALF-DAY DISCUSSION ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

September 17, 2013

Thank you Mr. President,

I am honored to speak here, exactly 90 years after my great-grandfather, Chief Deskaheh, traveled to Geneva from the Six Nations Confederacy to bring attention to human rights violations against his people. I come before you today with a similar goal: concrete measures to help end violations of indigenous rights.

Recommendations for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples should have the support of authentic indigenous governments and peoples. Recommendations should be few and focused, reasonable, and workable for the United Nations. They should be lasting, and improve the lives of indigenous peoples.

More than 70 indigenous governments and organizations have submitted three such major recommendations for action by the World Conference.

First, the United Nations should establish a new body with authority to promote implementation, monitor states' actions for compliance, and make recommendations to achieve the objectives of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Second, three steps should be taken to address violence against indigenous women: (i) convening a high-level conference to examine challenges to securing the safety and well-being of indigenous women and children; (ii) requiring that the United Nations body for monitoring and implementing the Declaration give particular attention to this issue; and (iii) appointing a Special Rapporteur on human rights issues of indigenous women and children.

Finally, action should be taken to provide indigenous peoples and governments a new status for participating in United Nations activities -- a permanent status that reflects their character as peoples and their authority as governments, so that they do not have to call themselves NGOs or civil society organizations.

These recommendations reinforce the spirit and intent of this discussion. The full text of these recommendations is available on our website, www.indianlaw.org. Thank you.