

**UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 14th Session (20 April to 1 May 2015)**  
Agenda Item 3(a): Outcome of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly  
known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

**Statement On Behalf of 90 Indigenous Nations and 21 Indigenous Organizations**

April 20, 2015

This statement is made by 90 indigenous nations in the Americas acting through their own governments. Also joining in this statement are 21 indigenous organizations and coalitions.<sup>i</sup>

The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples was an historic success. Indigenous nations and organizations around the world joined together to achieve concrete commitments to fulfill the promise of the Declaration. Yet, this is only the beginning. We must now follow through on the achievements of the World Conference if we are going to change our realities at home.

Today we make recommendations about three matters: creation of a strong implementing and monitoring body; adoption of rules to enhance participation of indigenous peoples' governments at the UN; and action to combat violence against indigenous women.

The outcome document itself calls for indigenous input into these decisions, and the voices of indigenous peoples' governments must be heard directly. Indigenous governments must have the opportunity to present proposals, to make comments on existing proposals, and to review and comment on the Secretary-General's report and recommendations to ECOSOC and to the General Assembly.

Regarding the implementing body, we wish to see a broad mandate with innovative elements that will let the body effectively promote, implement, and monitor states' compliance with the Declaration. The body should have authority to: gather and receive information from all sources; make country visits; conduct studies; write reports and recommendations; make general observations; share information about best practices; issue interpretations of the Declaration; take friendly measures to resolve conflicts through consensual solutions; and collaborate with other special mandate holders.

The body should have a balance of indigenous and other experts selected by both states and indigenous peoples' representative institutions with a sufficient number of independent experts with relevant expertise, capacity, and experience, to accommodate its expanded mandate, with a sufficient number of meeting days, and should, when possible, make use of internet and teleconferencing technology. The body must also have adequate financial resources to fulfill its mandate.

Importantly, the mandates of the Special Rapporteur and the Permanent Forum should not be jeopardized by the new body. Both perform critical functions in their own right, and the implementing body should enhance, not duplicate, their important work.

We also recommend new rules to give indigenous governments greater rights of participation within the UN and a new status that respects them as rights-holders and global actors. Indigenous governments must be able to participate as governments, not as civil society or NGOs, and they must be able to fully, effectively, and meaningfully participate in all UN meetings affecting their interests.

These new rules must, at the least, allow them to: attend and participate in meetings relevant to indigenous interests as determined by indigenous governments; submit written and oral statements; propose agenda items; and have priority over NGOs with regard to seating arrangements and order of speaking.

There will need to be a process to accredit indigenous governments. State recognition could be one criterion for accreditation, but it cannot be the only one. Indigenous governments are inherently sovereign. Their status does not, and must not, depend on states' recognition.

Accreditation standards must be robust, but they must also be flexible and responsive to regional realities and the diverse characteristics of indigenous peoples. To do this work, the UN should create a Committee, made up of both states and indigenous peoples' representative institutions.

Finally, we are deeply concerned about the global pandemic of violence against indigenous women and girls. We support the outcome document's call for the Commission on the Status of Women to consider empowerment of indigenous women, and we urge that this take place during the Commission's session in 2016. We also support the call for the Human Rights Council "to consider the causes and consequences of violence against indigenous women and girls," and we request the Council hold a panel discussion and request a research-based report by the Secretary-General on the issue.

We would welcome a joint report by the Special Rapporteurs on the rights of indigenous peoples and on violence against women, to address this crisis. We also urge the UN to request the new implementing body to pay particular attention to the rights of indigenous women and children, in order to ensure their full protection from all forms of violence and discrimination.

The full text of our recommendations is available at [indianlaw.org](http://indianlaw.org), and copies are available in the room.

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<sup>i</sup> This statement is made by 14 indigenous governments acting on their own behalf: Central Council of Tlingit Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska; Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma; Chickasaw Nation; Citizen Potawatomi Nation; Greenville Rancheria of Maidu Indians of California; Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians; Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe; Karuk Tribe of California; Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation; Metis Nation; Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe; Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians; Tonawanda Seneca Nartion; and the Yurok Tribe of California.

And by 5 indigenous intergovernmental organizations representing 84 tribes: Alliance of Colonial Era Tribes (11 tribes: Haliwa Saponi Indian Tribe; Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware; Lumbee Tribe; Monacan Indian Nation; MOWA Band of Choctaw; Nanticoke Indian Tribe; Nanticoke Leni-Lenape Tribal Nation; Pocasset Tribe; Rappahannock Tribe; United Houma Nation; Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe); California Association of Tribal Governments (32 tribes: Big Lagoon Rancheria; Big Pine Rancheria; Big Sandy Rancheria; Cahuilla Band of Mission Indians of the Cahuilla Reservation; Cher–Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria; Cloverdale Rancheria; Enterprise Rancheria of Maidu Indians of California; Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians; Greenville Rancheria of Maidu Indians of California; Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake; Hoopa Valley Tribe; Hopland Band of Pomo Indians of the Hopland Reservation; Ione Band of Miwok Indians of California; Jamul Indian Village; Karuk Tribe of California; Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria; Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla and Cupeno Indians; Mesa Grande Band of Kumeyaay Indians; Morongo Band of Mission Indians; Northfork Rancheria of Mono Indians of California; Pit River Tribe; Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians; Resigini Rancheria; Scotts Valley Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians of California; Smith River Rancheria; Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians; Susanville Indian Rancheria; Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation; Washoe Tribes of California and Nevada; Wiyot Tribe; and the Yurok Tribe of the Yurok Reservation); the Confederation of Sovereign Nanticoke-Lenape Tribes (3 tribes: Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware; the Nanticoke Indian Tribe; and the Nanticoke Leni-Lenape Tribal Nation); United South and Eastern Tribes (26 tribes: Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas; Aroostook Band of Micmacs; Catawba Indian Nation; Cayuga Nation; Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana; Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana; Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians; Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians; Jena Band of Choctaw Indians; Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe; Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida; Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; the Mohegan Tribe; Narragansett Indian Tribe; Oneida Indian Nation; Passamaquoddy Tribe – Indian Township; Passamaquoddy Tribe – Pleasant Point; Penobscot Indian Nation; Poarch Band of Creek Indians; Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe; Seminole Tribe of Florida; Seneca Nation of Indians; Shinnecock Indian Nation; Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana; and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)); and the United Tribes of Michigan (12 tribes).

And by 16 indigenous organizations and coalitions: Alliance of Tribal Coalitions to End Violence; Americans for Indian Opportunity; American Indians in Texas; Amerindian Peoples Association; Indian Law Resource Center; National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center; National Congress of American Indians; Native Americans in Philanthropy; Native American Rights Fund; Native Women’s Society of the Great Plains; Restoring Ancestral Winds, Inc.; Southwest Indigenous Women’s Coalition; Strong Hearted Native Women’s Coalition, Inc.; Vision Maker Media; Washington Indian Civil Rights Commission; and the Washington State Native American Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault – Women Spirit Coalition.