



AMERICAN INDIAN LAW ALLIANCE

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

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Commission on Human Rights
Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
Working Group on Indigenous Populations, 19th Session
23-27 July 2001

Intervention by Tonya Gonnella Frichner (Onondaga Nation)

Item 4: Review of Developments - Principal Theme: "Indigenous Peoples and their right to development, including their right to participate in development affecting them"

July 24, 2001

Greetings, Mme. Chairperson.

Our delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the Working Group. We share the view expressed by our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters that your exemplary commitment to the concerns of Indigenous Peoples has helped to prepare us for a new millennium.

In this new millennium, globalization is promoted as producing a more efficient sustainable development, but the type of development produced often is neither efficient nor sustainable for all. In fact, for Indigenous Peoples "sustainable development" is an oxymoron because, by most definitions, development demands natural resources and the devouring of the world's resources for development is not sustainable.

For hundreds of generations, Indigenous Peoples have developed a higher understanding of the technologies of plants and renewable resource harvesting, that is compatible with sustainable ecological order and can serve as a model of sustainable management and development in respect to human beings and the environment.

Indigenous Peoples' development came in the form of subsistence and still does. For example, only subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering were practiced. In addition, Indigenous Peoples of the Western Hemisphere continue to participate in active trade and commerce with each other, as well as with the United States, Canada, Europe and other nations. Indigenous Nations have an ancient tradition of nationhood that was developed long before the Europeans arrived. Traditional values are the basis for our social and political institutions, as well as our sense of place within the natural world.

Throughout history, and continuing to the present day, those who are often well-meaning, have worked to halt Indigenous Peoples' ways of life, resulting in the destruction of our economic systems, among other things.

Globalization, in its present form, does not recognize the benefits of diverse systems of government and culture, but instead assumes that the most powerful countries have the right to decide on these systems for all nations and peoples.

Mme. Chairperson, globalization has become the new colonization for Indigenous Peoples.

Recommendations:

- * We urge governments to enact legislation concerning the recognition, protection and restoration of Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories. These traditional lands and territories are the foundation of our self-determination as Indigenous Peoples. They are integral to development that is in harmony with the Earth; they are essential to our survival, our identity and dignity including our collective rights.
- * We urge governments to recognize and enshrine legislatively the right of self-determination of Indigenous Peoples in accordance with the principles and perspectives as expressed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- * We urge governments to adopt the Declaration.
- * We demand the honouring of our treaties. Violations of these sacred agreements are violations of our human and collective rights under international law and the natural laws of the Creator.
- * We demand accountability of governments, as well as corporations, international financial institutions and multinational organizations to Indigenous Peoples.
- * We demand to be full partners and participants in all discussions relating to land, resources and cultural integrity.
- * We urge the full and informed consent, consultation and participation of our Indigenous Peoples and Nations in all negotiations by local governments concerning gaming and the establishment of casinos on our territories.
- * We urge the UN Development Assistance Framework to encourage the full participation of Indigenous Peoples and Nations in its work.
- * We call for Indigenous Peoples to be parties to all discussions and negotiations within the World Trade Organization, which gives direct access to the natural resources located on Indigenous territories. To facilitate this, we would propose the establishment of a permanent forum for Indigenous Peoples within the WTO.
- * We urge the World Bank to suspend its support of extracting and extractive activities on the territories of Indigenous Peoples and Nations. Additionally, we urge the World Bank to distribute its Bank Strategy for Consultations with External Stakeholders to Indigenous Peoples and Nations to ensure full participation and transparency.
- * We call for urgent mobilization of the requisite resources, including financial resources to support the work of the Permanent Forum.
- * We urge the eradication of poverty, not just as a development goal, but as a central challenge for human rights.

Danayto, Mme. Chairperson.