

**Human Rights Council**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Session**  
**Geneva**  
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**Indigenous Issues – Report by Special Rapporteur on the Rights and Individual Freedoms of the Indigenous Peoples**

**Statement by the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (FAIRA) – Les Malezer**

We welcome the report presented by the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Issues and the continued quality of his work under this mandate.

Unfortunately it is the situation that the human rights of Indigenous Peoples continue to be extensively violated despite over two decades of consideration in the United Nations.

The serious breaches of the rights of Indigenous Peoples continue centre upon the main issues of disenfranchisement in the political systems of the State, loss of and threats to our lands, identity and cultural way of life, and impoverishment through local, national and global economic exploitation of our natural and other resources.

At a period when the new global millennium priority is to address human rights abuses and end political self-interests in complying with global standards, it is unfortunate that the United Nations has this last year failed to introduce a General Assembly resolution calling for States to address the breaches of human rights of Indigenous Peoples and action through the various programs and mechanisms of the United Nations.

This is the first time in two decades that the General Assembly has failed to do so.

Further there has been no written report presented to the General Assembly on the progress of the Second Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, and the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues were not taken up by ECOSOC before the last plenary of the General Assembly.

We hope that those States who continue to jeopardise the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples take note of the assessment of the Special Rapporteur that this instrument should be adopted as soon as possible. All expert reports on the Declaration come to this same conclusion. It is now only political self-interests of States and multinational economic forces that stand in the way, and that should be a serious concern addressed by this UN human rights body if it is to be respected as pillar of world order.

We call upon the Human Rights Council to continue to emphasise the need to address abuses of human rights against Indigenous Peoples by:

- Continuing the mandate of the Special Rapporteur;
- Continuing the mandate and work of the former Working Group on Indigenous Populations, including the convening of a session of this Working Group in July this year;
- Ensuring that Indigenous experts are appointed to positions in the United Nations including any expert body advising the HRC;
- Ensuring States are adequately examined under the universal peer review system on their relationships with Indigenous Peoples, and that complaints of human rights abuses by the State are given due attention;
- Calling, in respect of the Indigenous Peoples of the world, for States' to participate and cooperate with UN special mechanisms, adopt and comply with international standards, and support and promote the UN Second Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

We are able to support the further appointment of Professor Stavenhagen for another term as Special Rapporteur should the opportunity exist after the review of special mechanisms.

Thank you.