

## Pacific Caucus on Indigenous Issues

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### 2<sup>nd</sup> Consultations Workshop

Brisbane

26 - 28 April 2005

Madam Chairperson, I take the floor to present the report on behalf of the Pacific Caucus of Indigenous Peoples. First, on behalf of the Pacific Caucus, I would like to offer congratulations to the members of the Permanent Forum and to your election, Madam Chairperson, as Chairperson. This report arises from the Second Consultations Workshop of the Pacific Caucus on Indigenous Issues. The Pacific Caucus is an informal association of Indigenous delegations participating in the sessions of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. We appreciate that extra speaking time will be allowed for this statement on behalf of many Indigenous Peoples' delegations, including those unable to attend.

The Second Pacific Consultations Workshop was held on 26 to 28 April 2005 in Brisbane, Australia. The workshop was attended by fifty-four participants from fifteen States and territories in the Pacific basin. This wide representation ensures that the voice of the Indigenous Peoples from this region – most of whom are not able to attend these UN meetings – can be heard. The outcome of the workshop is represented in the thirteen groups of recommendations contained in this report. All recommendations were adopted by consensus and complement the recommendations arising from the first Consultations Workshop held in 2004. The participants in the workshop express their appreciation to the Representative on the Permanent Forum, Professor Mick Dodson, for his presence at the workshop, and also to Ms Mililani Trask, the former, and first, representative from the region on the Permanent Forum, for her contribution to the understanding of the Permanent Forum and the United Nations. Thanks must be given to the sponsors of this workshop, as their contribution was vital for the gathering of Indigenous Peoples from throughout the Pacific region to occur. The sponsors' support for this most important regional activity should be widely recognised.

Madam Chairperson, the resolutions contained in this report provide evidence of the importance placed upon the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues by the Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific. The Permanent Forum is asked to consider how an annual regional workshop of the Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific might be enhanced in the future to advance the work of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and how representatives from the Pacific Region – being both State and Indigenous Peoples' nominees – can be assisted to establish their regional presence and availability to the Indigenous Peoples.

Madam Chairperson, I bring attention now to Resolution 4 of the Pacific Consultations Workshop which is headed the Millennium Development Goal – To Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger. This resolution contains eight (8) recommendations, along with fourteen (14) observations. The Pacific Caucus of Indigenous Peoples:

1. Recommend that the Permanent Forum oppose proposals for aid in the Pacific region which impose unwarranted direct or indirect constraints on the Indigenous Peoples, whether they be social, economic, environmental, cultural or political constraints;
2. Recommend that the Permanent forum oppose development packages in the Pacific region that require the privatisation of natural resources without the consent of the Indigenous Peoples;
3. Recommend that MDG reports on poverty, produced by the United Nations, incorporate sections on Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific region, Indigenous Peoples' definitions of poverty, reports from Indigenous Peoples, and analyses of poverty within Indigenous Peoples' frameworks;
4. Recommend that the Permanent Forum support a wider definition of poverty amongst Indigenous Peoples to include indicators such as access to lands, territories and resources, dislocation, longevity and life-limiting factors including infant mortality, suicides, and pandemics, basic human rights such as right to food, shelter, health and education, cultural genocide, and social support.
5. Recommend the Permanent Forum urge States to develop human rights plans of action which address relevant issues of poverty eradication amongst Indigenous Peoples;
6. Recommend that resolutions, plans and programmes, including the MDG, relating to the eradication of poverty amongst Indigenous Peoples ensure the participation of Indigenous Peoples, and address issues including land and natural resources, community training, capability building program for life improvement, employment generation, adequate housing, financial resources, technical resources, and self-governance;

7. *Recommend* that the Permanent Forum urge States to ensure Indigenous Peoples' rights to medical health care services are recognised;
8. *Recommend* that the Permanent Forum remind ECOSOC that the world's wealth can be more equitably distributed if powerful nations reduce military expenditure and use savings to alleviate poverty throughout the world, and that this approach has very important application in the Pacific region where the future of the region is under the control of foreign military powers.

Madam Chairperson, further to this resolution on the MDG No 1., the Pacific Consultations Workshop has adopted a resolution dealing with the proposed 'Pacific Plan' which is currently being formulated by States. In relation to the Pacific Plan, the Pacific Caucus of Indigenous Peoples:

1. *Call upon* the Pacific Island Forum and governments to immediately impose a moratorium on the Pacific Plan to enable a more comprehensive and sustainable dialogue to take place.
2. *Recommend* the ADB, UNDP, the World Bank, and others who are involved with this plan to suspend support for this initiative until they can be sure the Pacific Plan has the prior informed and collective consent of the indigenous peoples of Pacific countries.
3. *Recommend* that the United Nations' Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues:
  - a) Note our concerns regarding the Pacific Plan, especially our call for a moratorium on the adoption or implementation of the Plan;
  - b) Recommend to ECOSOC that regional development plans, in accordance with the principles of sustainability, equity and benefit sharing, should take account of and address the rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly our right to development in the context of the right to self determination;
  - c) Call upon the members of the Pacific Forum to extend the consultation period for the Pacific Plan to adequately elaborate in the Plan the exercise of the rights of interests of Indigenous Peoples;
  - d) Request the Special Rapporteur on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples, in accordance with his mandate, to consider examination of the purpose, implementation and likely effects of the Pacific Plan as it may affect Indigenous Peoples in the Pacific region; and
  - e) Take any other action as may be appropriate to promote and protect the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples under the Pacific Plan.

The final resolution under this agenda item, Madam Chairperson, from the Pacific Consultations Workshop, concerns the APEC Integrated Oceans Management Forum. This Plan (APEC proposal 2004/10MF111/034-) provides open access to States, to develop and control the Pacific Ocean and the marine resources of Indigenous Peoples' island territories. These States include Australia, Canada, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Peru and the USA,

Only two Pacific Island States - New Zealand and Australia - are active in the APEC Plan, and it is an issue of injustice if these two States are speaking for all Pacific Island States and Peoples in APEC. These States are not in a position to commit the Pacific Ocean and all its resources, which are a major source of livelihood for many Indigenous Peoples and Pacific Island States, to APEC needs.

The indigenous Pacific island nations have been excluded from this initiative, and no consultation has been undertaken with our peoples' nations, representatives or organisations. As island peoples, the cultural survival, health and nutrition of many Indigenous Peoples depend on our territorial waters and the Pacific Ocean. It is evident that this APEC initiative will have a negative impact on our ability to pursue our collective right to development, and on food security, and will exacerbate extreme poverty in the Pacific Region.

We reject and oppose the APEC Integrated Oceans Management Plan. We call for immediate consultation with our peoples and all our nations and territories for a meaningful good faith effort to integrate our indigenous peoples and nations into the decision making process of APEC; and we request the Permanent Forum to include recommendations in its report in 2005 to address these concerns about the APEC Integrated Oceans Management Plan;

Madam Chairperson, that concludes this presentation of the Report of the Pacific Consultations Workshop. Delegates from the Pacific Caucus will present the remaining resolutions in the report under the relevant agenda items during this session of the Permanent Forum. I thank you for the opportunity to present this report and again remind the Permanent Forum members of the value in establishing regional representative infrastructure for Indigenous Peoples. Thank you.