



National
Congress of
American
Indians



Advancing Decisions of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

A Joint Oral Statement Offered at the 30th Session of the UN Human Rights Council
by the National Congress of American Indians, Native American Rights Fund, Indian Law Resource Center, Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, and Americans for Indian Opportunity

Item 3 – Annual half-day panel discussion on the rights of indigenous peoples
(theme: follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, and its implications for the achievement of the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)
(September 22 2015)

The National Congress of American Indians, the Native American Rights Fund, Indian Law Resource Center, Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, and Americans for Indian Opportunity offer this joint statement with recommendations to advance key decisions of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

The World Conference celebrated the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but also called attention to barriers to its implementation. The Outcome Document¹ identifies three key issues requiring further UN action:

1. Development of a permanent implementing and monitoring body for the UN Declaration;²
2. Establishment of new rules to enable the participation of indigenous governing institutions in the UN;³ and
3. Actions to combat violence against indigenous women.⁴

First, nothing will do more to advance indigenous peoples' rights than creation of a permanent implementing and monitoring body for the UN Declaration. The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples must be restructured and given a new, broad mandate to enable it to serve as this implementing body. It must be able to consider information from all sources; conduct country visits; offer general observations; and, most importantly, issue studies, reports, and recommendations for actions by all relevant actors. It should have a balance of indigenous and other independent experts from all regions of the world, and both states and indigenous peoples' representatives should play a role in nominating and selecting members.

Second, while the Secretary-General continues to release reports about the need to provide indigenous governing institutions permanent participation rights within the UN,⁵ action

¹ G.A. Res. 69/2, U.N. Doc. A/RES/69/2 (Sept. 25, 2014).

² *Id.* at ¶¶ 28, 40.

³ *Id.* at ¶¶ 33, 40.

⁴ *Id.* at ¶ 19.

has been slow. We support creation of a new status that will enable indigenous governments to participate broadly and effectively in the UN's work and we recommend creation of an accreditation committee for these governments.

Each of these decisions must be carried out with the full participation of indigenous peoples, their representatives and governments, as called for in the Outcome Document and the Secretary-General's report.⁶

Third, the Outcome Document includes a request for the Human Rights Council to consider examining the causes and consequences of violence against indigenous women and girls, and we recommend this Council:

1. *Decide* to hold a half-day panel discussion on the topic at its 32nd or 33rd session;
2. *Invite* the Secretary-General to provide a report on the issue with recommendations to enhance existing special procedures by requiring regular joint reports; and
3. *Urge* the Secretary-General to consider the rights and special needs of indigenous women and children in developing both the System-wide Action Plan and the implementing and monitoring body.

Taken together, these three broad but achievable measures are essential to implement the Outcome Document and to realize the promise of the UN Declaration.

⁵ The Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General on Progress made in the implementation of the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, delivered to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly*, U.N. Doc A/70/84-E/2015/76 (May 18, 2015).

⁶ *Id.*