

COLLECTIVE STATEMENT
Intervention to the Eighth Session of the
United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2009
Submitted by the Indigenous Water Caucus
Agenda Item 8

WATER IS SACRED:
THE NEED FOR AN INDIGENOUS WORLD FORUM ON WATER AND PEACE

Dear Madame Chair:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns with you. We thank the people of this country for allowing us to gather on their beautiful land.

As part of the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and sustainable solutions to the crisis of climate change and water security, we are urging the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues the following:

1. We call for a meeting by the PFII Secretariat and designated member(s) of the PFII, with the Secretariat and Advisory Committee members of the Indigenous World Forum on Water and Peace, UN agencies, and donor countries to discuss and decide on mechanisms for convening the Indigenous World Forum on Water and Peace. We call for this request from the PFII, through ECOSOC to the General Assembly and its subsidiary body, the Human Rights Council. This request for support for this forum was extended and included in the final report in 2007 and was requested in 2008 by a total of 42 Indigenous organizations from many regions globally.
2. Indigenous Peoples need UN support for our 2010 Indigenous World Forum on Water and Peace where we will discuss our rights and responsibilities as caretakers. At the preparatory meeting, a cultural framework will provide the foundation for the forum's development of the IWFWP. We request that ECOSOC set up a fund for the IWFWP. This forum is relevant to all nations, highlighting holistic responsibilities that we all have to face.
3. We affirm and support the urgent request for the formation of a Special Rapporteur on water, Indigenous Peoples and human rights. We urge the Permanent Forum to elevate these requests to ECOSOC and the General Assembly, which in turn will submit it to the Human Rights Council. We stress that for Indigenous Peoples, water is not just a human right, that all living things have a sacred right to water: water is sacred.
4. In many Indigenous cultures, women are the caretakers of water. We call on the Permanent Forum to support in practical ways women's special role in our sacred traditions on water, and their obligations and responsibilities in protecting and caring for water. Specifically calling on the World Water Forum to create appropriate space for Indigenous Women's participation in the next forum, to UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF and UNDP to engage with indigenous women in the development and

implementation of their programs. There should be a special emphasis on, support and funding for community-based education and training for water quality monitoring by Indigenous Peoples, especially women and youth.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

Signatories:

Indigenous Environmental Network, USA

CORE Centre for Organisation Research and Education, India

CAPAJ Comision Juridica para el Autodesarrollo de los Pueblos Originarios Andinos

Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development, USA

Native Women's Association of Canada

KoutuNui - Traditional Council of Chiefs, Cook Islands

Kanak Agency for Development, New Caledonia

Nehiyaw Cree Language and Culture Society, Canada

Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, India

All Dimasa Students' Union, India

Borosa Onsai Afat, India

All India Tribal Literary Forum, India

Federation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of Asia

Yamasi People, Southeast Indigenous Peoples' Center, USA

Working Circle of Indians of North America – AKIN

Lipan Apache Women's Defense, USA

American Indian Law Alliance, USA

Flying Eagle Women Fund, USA

GROOTS, Canada (Aboriginal Chapter)

Indigenous Chapter Centre for Response-Based Practice, Canada

Mikmaq Grand Council of Chiefs, Canada

Tetuwani Sioux Nation Treaty Council