

**UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 14th Session (20 April to 1 May 2015)**  
Agenda Item 3(a): Outcome of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly  
known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

**Statement On Behalf of \_\_ Indigenous Nations and \_\_ Indigenous Organizations**  
(to be presented April 20, 2015)

*Drafted March 20, 2015*

By the Chickasaw Nation, the Central Council of Tlingit Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, the Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, the Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians, the California Association of Tribal Governments, the Indian Law Resource Center, the Native American Rights Fund, the National Congress of American Indians...

This statement is made by \_\_ indigenous nations in the Americas acting through their own governments. Also joining in this statement are \_\_ indigenous organizations and coalitions.

The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples was an historic success. Indigenous nations and organizations around the world joined together to achieve concrete commitments to fulfill the promise of the Declaration. Yet, this is only the beginning. We must now follow through on the achievements of the World Conference if we are going to change our realities at home.

Today we make recommendations about three matters: creation of a strong implementing and monitoring body; adoption of rules to enhance participation of indigenous peoples' governments at the UN; and action to combat violence against indigenous women.

The outcome document itself calls for indigenous input into these decisions, and the voices of indigenous peoples' governments must be heard directly. Indigenous governments must have the opportunity to present proposals, to make comments on existing proposals, and to review and comment on the Secretary-General's report and recommendations to ECOSOC and to the General Assembly.

Regarding the implementing body, we wish to see a broad mandate with innovative elements that will let the body effectively promote, implement, and monitor states' compliance with the Declaration. The body should have authority to: gather and receive information from all sources; make country visits; conduct studies; write reports and recommendations; make general observations; share information about best practices; issue interpretations of the Declaration; take friendly measures to resolve conflicts through consensual solutions; and collaborate with other special mandate holders.

The body should have a balance of indigenous and other experts selected by both states and indigenous peoples' representative institutions with a sufficient number of independent experts with relevant expertise, capacity, and experience, to accommodate its expanded mandate, with a sufficient number of meeting days, and should, when possible, make use of internet and

teleconferencing technology. The body must also have adequate financial resources to fulfill its mandate.

Importantly, the mandates of the Special Rapporteur and the Permanent Forum should not be jeopardized by the new body. Both perform critical functions in their own right, and the implementing body should enhance, not duplicate, their important work.

We also recommend new rules to give indigenous governments greater rights of participation within the UN and a new status that respects them as rights-holders and global actors. Indigenous governments must be able to participate as governments, not as civil society or NGOs, and they must be able to fully, effectively, and meaningfully participate in all UN meetings affecting their interests.

These new rules must, at the least, allow them to: attend and participate in meetings relevant to indigenous interests as determined by indigenous governments; submit written and oral statements; propose agenda items; and have priority over NGOs with regard to seating arrangements and order of speaking.

There will need to be a process to accredit indigenous governments. State recognition could be one criterion for accreditation, but it cannot be the only one. Indigenous governments are inherently sovereign. Their status does not, and must not, depend on states' recognition.

Accreditation standards must be robust, but they must also be flexible and responsive to regional realities and the diverse characteristics of indigenous peoples. To do this work, the UN should create a Committee, made up of both states and indigenous peoples' representative institutions.

Finally, we are deeply concerned about the global pandemic of violence against indigenous women and girls. We support the outcome document's call for the Commission on the Status of Women to consider empowerment of indigenous women, and we urge that this take place during the Commission's session in 2016. We also support the call for the Human Rights Council "to consider the causes and consequences of violence against indigenous women and girls," and we request the Council hold a panel discussion and request a research-based report by the Secretary-General on the issue.

We would welcome a joint report by the Special Rapporteurs on the rights of indigenous peoples and on violence against women, to address this crisis. We also urge the UN to request the new implementing body to pay particular attention to the rights of indigenous women and children, in order to ensure their full protection from all forms of violence and discrimination.

The full text of our recommendations is available at [indianlaw.org](http://indianlaw.org), and copies are available in the room.