

UN/Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Proposal

Be it resolved that the Loretto Community gathered in Assembly 2009 states its unequivocal support for the United States to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Assembly calls upon the Loretto Community to issue a public statement calling for President Obama to adopt the Declaration as United States policy. The Assembly also calls upon its membership to actively advocate for this action.

Background/rationale

On September 13, 2007, the United States was one of only four member states to cast a "no" vote when the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, also known as DRIP. The UN describes the Declaration as setting "an important standard for the treatment of indigenous peoples that will undoubtedly be a significant tool towards eliminating human rights violations against the planet's 370 million indigenous people and assisting them in combating discrimination and marginalisation."

The Declaration sets out the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples, as well as their rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, education and other issues. It also "emphasizes the rights of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions, and to pursue their development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations" It prohibits discrimination against indigenous peoples and "promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them and their right to remain distinct and to pursue their own visions of economic and social development."

Despite claims by the United States that the Declaration "went too far in giving indigenous peoples ownership of their traditional lands and veto rights over national legislation and local management of resources," refusal to sign the document exposes the Indigenous Peoples of the U.S. to continuing violations of their human and legal rights.

Numerous articles within the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples state the rights of indigenous peoples to grant or withhold their Free Prior and Informed Consent to projects within their communities. By publicly advocating this Declaration, the Loretto Community would encourage local action and support of initiatives such as the Manila Declaration of the International Conference on Extractive Industries and Indigenous Peoples (March 23-25, 2009), which underscores that "Indigenous Peoples need to be the decision makers on whether or not mining should take place in their communities, and under what conditions this may occur."

Conflicts arise over the 60% of the world's most coveted mineral resources—as well as most of the planet's reserves of fresh water—that are located within Indigenous home territories. The Manila Declaration asserts that respect for the preservation of life on earth, and the human right to food and water, "must have precedence over extractive industry projects."

The United States, New Zealand and Canada now stand as the only UN Member States still refusing to adopt the DRIP, Australia having done so just this year. As members of U. S. Civil Society, it is up to us to insist that our government take its

responsibilities seriously and cooperate with all the other countries that have accepted responsibility for ensuring Indigenous People's human rights. Taking a public stance on this issue would be in keeping with Loretto's commitment to stand in solidarity with the most marginalized in society.

Implementation

Loretto members are encouraged to send letters to newspaper editors, President Barack Obama and UN Ambassador Susan Rice advocating that the U.S. commit itself to respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, beginning with the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Sally Dunne will make materials available at the Assembly to facilitate this advocacy campaign.

Submitted by

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June 26, 2009 – This passed unanimously by all members present. Proposal approved.

Thursday, June 25th - Presentation of Proposals - 2:00 - 5:00 pm - Marlene Spero, Recorder

Presented by Sally Dunne

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Sept. 2007 the General Assembly of the UN passed it – the US only one of 4 countries refusing to sign it. The 4 countries have the greatest indigenous population – Australia finally did adopt it

Some say the declaration went too far in giving indigenous peoples the right to their land.

Concept of free, prior, informed consent. Recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples the right to have a say in what happens to their lands. Violence and deaths of those in Peru – example of this right.

Every issue related to every other one. Directly related to climate change. Take over land, use it inappropriately and add the global warming. In Peru, one of the largest glaciers endangered. Dynamite the glacier to get at resources under the glacier.

Undertake a campaign to get this passed. So many land rights, legal issues involved that it might be hard to get passed by the US.

NO CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

IS there a way to make a statement about what's happening in Iran while we're here?