

LILLOOET COUNCIL OF CHIEFS

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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Working Group on Indigenous Populations
Seventh Session
31 July - 4 August 1989

Remarks of Tmicwus, Spokesperson for
the eleven Chiefs of STL'ATL'IMX Nation under
Agenda Item 5: Evolution of Standards Concerning
the Rights of Indigenous Populations

MADAME CHAIR:

I am Tmicwus, one of eleven Chiefs of STL'ATL'IMX. I have been appointed by my brother chiefs to be the Spokesman for our nation at this session of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

We wish to congratulate the Working Group on its first effort at preparing the draft preambular paragraphs and principles for insertion into a universal declaration on indigenous rights. It is the view of the STL'ATL'IMX that a declaration of such sweeping importance cannot be concluded and ratified without correcting past wrongful conceptions about indigenous peoples.

As the Working Group is by now well aware, international thinking and opinion is only now beginning to consider elevating indigenous peoples from a subhuman status to something more approximating full human status. The proper term which must now be used for indigenous human beings is that they are a people. While this conception may only be new to some, I would point out to this assembly that the name we know ourselves by, and the name others know us by - the word STL'ATL'IMX means "people and the territory we are obliged to care for." So you see, Madame Chair, we are not a stranger to the idea of being a people. We believe it is good and proper that the rest of the world know us and deal with us as a people. We believe it is appropriate that the Universal Declaration on Indigenous Rights refer to us and other indigenous nations as peoples. The word implies correctly that we are distinct and different from all others in the world and should be known in this way.

The STL'ATL'IMX is made up of a people which has the duty to live and care for the lands and resources in our territory. Because the word territory includes a boundary within which lay lands and natural resources we believe that this is an appropriate term to describe our domain. As a people we have the responsibility to care and use the lands and resources inside our territory - and we must be the sole people responsible. When our territory is described in ways other than as

STL'ATL'IMX DISTRICTS: N'Quatqua, Xwisten, Cayoose Creek, Douglas, Xaxl'ip, Lillooet, Ts'Kw'Aylaxw Samahquam, Chalath, Lil'Wat, Skookumchuck

a territory, our people and other people get confused. They mistreat the lands and resources, and they make life more difficult for humans and other living things to live. We, therefore urge the Working Group to insert the word Territory in the place of lands and let the word mean that area of geography which contains lands and resources for the use and benefit of a people.

We have become aware that representatives of States like Canada wish to turn the clock back in time and refer to us as something other than as a people. If I were a Canadian, perhaps I would want to make the STL'ATL'IMX people something other than human beings too. States' representatives have said they wish to call us "ethnic groups" or "minority groups." These are just new words for making us subhuman -- a people who can be controlled by the State even if we do not give our consent.

Madame Chair, if you and the United Nations decides to call us something other than a people, then you will have defeated the whole purpose of the United Nations Charter and the mandate of this Working Group. Peace in this world among humans is dependent on all human beings and their institutions treating human beings fairly and equally. After five hundred years where some humans placed themselves on a pedestal saying they are superior to other human beings, this practice must come to a stop. We are a people and we do have a territory for which we are responsible. To deny this now is to deny that the earth is a round ball hanging in space.

STL'ATL'IMX is a mature people which has lived on this planet for thousands of years. We wish to live on friendly terms with our neighbors. To have friendly relations, we must have mutual respect. We know the State of Canada does not wish to be our friends and our neighbors. They wish to steal our lands and our natural resources. They wish to do this under a disguise of words like "ethnic group" instead of acting like a grown up and dealing with us as neighbors

The STL'ATL'IMX is a people equal to dealing with any people in the world with fairness and honor. When you make a Declaration which universally applies to relations between all peoples, then you must not heed the advice of those who wish to hide behind confusing and misleading words which only prevent honorable people from knowing true intentions. States governments do not need to fear the intentions of a people like the STL'ATL'IMX. We do not want anything that is not naturally ours. An honorable people does not have to steal from neighbors.

I would make one additional observation concerning the text of the draft declaration - let the declaration say that indigenous nations must give their consent just as any other mature person. We have the capacity to think and consider proposals. Sometimes we give our consent, and sometimes we do not give our consent. That is the nature of relations between human beings. There is some suggestion that the declaration should use the word consult instead of consent. Madame Chair, this is just another way of creating confusion. Let the declaration speak clearly. Let it say that we are human beings, we are peoples with responsibilities for territories, and we must be recognized as having the capacity to grant or withhold our consent. Without these clear terms, the declaration will create more confusion. When it is plain and straight forward, the declaration will mean that humans will for the first time seek to work as neighbors - they will no longer rely on deceit and confusion as a way to steal from a neighbor.

Thank you.

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Remarks of Tmicwus, Spokesperson for the eleven Chiefs of
STL'ATL'IMX Nation under Agenda Item 5: Evolution of Standards
Concerning the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

MADAME CHAIR:

I am Tmicwus, one of eleven Chiefs of STL'ATL'IMX. I have been appointed by my brother chiefs to be the Spokesman for our nation at this session of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples.

Alongside our Brother Nations we are here to discuss and present to the Working Group on its first effort at preparing the draft preambular paragraphs and principles for insertion into a universal declaration on indigenous rights. Our goal is to enhance and achieve Freedom, Justice, and Peace for the STL'ATL'IMX, and develop our Human Relations with other Peoples and Nations. Our delivery and participation comes in a Spirit of inherent dignity with equal and inalienable rights for all. We seek to have such Spirit and Respect be regarded our Nation. It is the view of the STL'ATL'IMX that a declaration of such sweeping importance cannot be concluded and ratified without correcting past wrongful conceptions about indigenous peoples. These conceptions have caused shame and abuse to our territory and people.

As the Working Group is by now well aware, international thinking and

opinion is only now beginning to consider elevating indigenous peoples from a subhuman status to something more approximating full human status. The proper term which must now be used for indigenous human beings is that they are a PEOPLE. While this conception may only be new to some, I would point out to this assembly that the name we know ourselves by, and the name others know us by - the word STL'ATL'IMX means "people and the territory we are obliged to care for." We are the Natives of the Territory and Lands of our homeland. So you see, Madame Chair, we are not a stranger to the idea of being a people. ** Addendum* We believe it is good and proper that the rest of the world know us and deal with us as a people. We believe it is appropriate that the Universal Declaration on Indigneous Rights refer to us and other indigenous nations as peoples. The word implies correctly that we are distinct from all others in the world and should be known in this way. - But we are the same in relation to Mother Earth or the Universe. We all come from Mother Earth and we need to respect each other as Sister, Brother and Neighbors.

The STL'ATL'IMX is made up of a people which has the duty to live and *and* care for the lands a resources in our territory. Because the word territory includes a boundary within which lay lands and natural resources we believe that this is an appropriate term to describe our domain. As a people we have the responsibility to care and use the lands and resources inside our territory - and we must be the sole people responsible. When our territory is described in ways other than as territory, our people and other people get confused. They mistreat the lands, resources and environment and they make life more difficult for humans and other living things to live. We, therefore urge the Working Group to insert the word

territory in the place of lands and let the word mean that area of geography which contains lands and resources for the use and benefit of a people.

We have become aware that representatives of States like Canada wish to turn the clock back in time ^{and} refer to us as something other than as a people. If I were a Canadian, perhaps I would want to make the STL'ATL'IMX people something other than human beings too. States' representatives have said they wish to call us "ethnic groups" or "minority groups". These are just new words for naming us subhuman -- a people who can be controlled by the State even if we do not give our consent.

Madame Chair, if you and the United Nations decides to call us something other than a people, then you will have defeated the whole purpose of the United Nations Charter and the mandate of this Working Group. Peace in this world among human beings is dependent on all human beings and their institutions treating human beings fairly and equally. After five hundred years where some humans placed themselves on a pedestal saying they are superior to other human beings, this practice must come to a stop. We are a people and we do have a territory for which we are responsible. To deny this now is to deny that the earth is round.

STL'ATL'IMX is a mature people which has lived on this planet since time immemorial. We wish to live on friendly terms with our neighbors. To have friendly relations, we must have mutual respect. The western civilization state governments need our land and resources to develop their so-called civilization system. This requirement enforces their system to steal our lands and natural resources. Therefore, we know

the state of Canada does not wish to be our friends and our neighbors. They wish to steal our lands and our natural resources. They wish to do this under a disguise of words like "ethnic group" instead of acting like a grownup and dealing with us as neighbors.

The STL'ATL'IMX is a people equal to dealing with any people in the world with fairness and honor. When you make a Declaration which universally applies to relations between all peoples, then you must not heed the advice of those who wish to hide behind confusing and misleading words which only prevent honorable people from knowing true intentions.

States Governments do not need to fear the intentions of a people like the STL'ATL'IMX. We do not want anything that is not naturally ours.

An honorable people does not have to steal from neighbors.

I would make one additional observation concerning the text of the draft declaration - let the declaration say that indigenous nations must give their consent just ^{as} any other mature person. We have the capacity to think and consider proposals. Sometimes we give our consent, and sometimes we do not give our consent. That is the nature of relations between human beings. There is some suggestion that the declaration should use the word consult instead of consent, Madame Chair, this is just another way of creating confusion. Let the declaration speak clearly. Let ~~it~~ say that we are human beings, we are peoples with responsibilities for territories, and we must be recognized as having the capacity to grant or withhold our consent. Without these clear terms, the declaration will create more confusion. When it plain and straightforward, the declaration will mean that humans will for the first time seek to work as neighbors - they will no longer rely on deceit and confusion as a way to steal from a neighbor.

For your furtherance, I will be making additional comments under the agenda item for "other matters."

* Addendum per Agenda item No. 5:

Evolution of Standards Concerning the
Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Remarks of TMICWUS, Spokesperson of STL'ATL'IMX NATION

Explanation Re: Tmicw and Uxwalmicw ,or, Land and Human Beings

In the STL'ATL'IMX language, whenever we speak about
UXWALMICW (human beings) one cannot isolate the TMICW (Land)
from each other. Therefore, whenever we address Human
Rights for the UXWALMICW we automatically include our
land and territory - this is STL'ATL'IMX. Whenever/
wherever UXWALMICW rights is being violated - the TMICW
is being violated.

Chief, TMICWUS (His Face comes from the Earth)

Tmicwus