

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

7th Session

April 21 - May 3rd, 2008

United Nations, New York, New York

Haudenosaunee Statement

on

Global Warming

The Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

*The Doctrine of Discovery:
Roots of Christendom's Empire.*

Recommendations

I. GLOBAL WARMING.

Today is EARTH DAY. In Indian country, every day is earth day. Since the so-called civilized world gives the earth one day of attention in its busy life, we must make the most of it.

History is important. Thirty one years ago some 146 Indigenous delegates from the Western Hemisphere accompanied by our Sami friends from Scandinavia journeyed to Geneva to address the UN on the issues and conditions of indigenous peoples.

We were the survivors of a horrendous genocide that took place in the four corners of the earth in the previous centuries. Yet, given what we thought might be our one chance to speak to the world, we chose not to speak for ourselves. Our first message was in defense of the natural world. We warned the world then of the dire consequences of the reckless exploitation of the earth by industrialized states.

In our opening address in that city so many years ago, we spoke on behalf of the natural world which had no seat at the international forum of the Palais de Nations. There was not then, nor is there today, a "seat for the eagle".

Or is there ?

Balance is the key to peace on earth. The powerful system that governs the life giving forces of the earth is the Law of Nature. Over a thousand years ago, the Great Peacemaker instructed the early leaders of the Haudenosaunee never to challenge that law because we will not prevail. The eagle is a representative of the Law of Nature. We, of the human species, are bound by the same law.

We will suffer in direct ratio to our transgressions of that law. Whatever we do, the earth will bring balance to itself. It is now in that very process.

Already, in August of 1978, an indigenous runner from Greenland, Angaanagaq Lyberth, informed a UN body meeting in New York that the ice was melting in the North. 22 years later, during the August 28-31, 2000 Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders at the UN in New York, which I addressed, I gave the same message: the ice is melting in the North.

Who heard our warnings?

Here we are 8 years later, with the same message, but with positive options that we have squandered as the years roll by. How the human species will fare in the now dramatically shortened process for saving ourselves is totally in our hands. Every day that we do not address this issue as a global problem is another day of lost options until we will reach the tipping point of the great natural systems that govern our lives on earth, the point of no return.

What then is our course of action? We know that business as usual is over.

We now must create a new paradigm, undertake a fundamental change of direction. We must change the values driving today's dominant economies. We must transform the values of commerce and consumerism to those of conservation, cooperation and sharing.

We must simplify our lives and renew our understanding of our relationship to the earth as the Mother of Life.

Lean hard on your leaders for change now! Leadership owes a heavy responsibility to all future life.