

CANADA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND & USA MANIPULATING POOR AFRICAN STATES TO SABOTAGE RIGHTS DECLARATION ON WORLDS INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

PREFACE

I work in the Indigenous Rights arena within the Organization of American States and receive confidential information from colleagues in the United Nations Indigenous Rights arena, it is not mentioned in the letters below - but I can tell you for a fact that the CANZUS Group (which is an acronym for Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America) have made considerable enticements to several poor African states - Botswana and Namibia among them - to be the 'public front' for the sabotage efforts of the CANZUS Group to destroy over 25 years of painstaking gains achieved by the world's indigenous peoples just when a degree of equity was about to be achieved at the United Nations, do not let the 'African scape Goats' deceive you as to whom are really behind this immoral plot.

*Damon Gerard Corrie
Founder/President of the
Pan-Tribal Confederacy of Indigenous Tribal Nations*

From: Cultural Survival
Date: Jun 13, 2007

After 24 years of negotiation, last June the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and forwarded it to the United Nations General Assembly. Given the Human Rights Council's strong endorsement, General Assembly approval should have been a matter of course. No other group (i.e. women, children, migrants, disabled, workers) has had to wait so long.

However, in November, at the request of African states, the General Assembly postponed consideration of the Declaration to allow governments more time to consider it.

Thursday, May 17, the Group of African States issued a new proposed Declaration that guts the Human Rights Council's text. It removes indigenous peoples' right to self-determination, restricts their rights to their lands and resources, and leaves it to governments to determine who is indigenous. Indigenous peoples around the globe categorically reject this 11th hour effort to undermine a quarter century of work to have their rights recognized by the United Nations.

We urgently need your help to persuade the General Assembly to reject the African text and to adopt the Human Rights Council's text.

To read more about the importance of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples go to <http://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/csv/index.cfm>.

Sincerely yours,

Ellen L. Lutz
Executive Director

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Letter to the President of the United Nations General Assembly:

June 12, 2007

H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly
United Nations
New York, NY 10017

Madame President,

Over the past twenty-four years, indigenous peoples and governments have patiently negotiated a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. After much compromise on all sides, a text acceptable to all was adopted by the Human Rights Council at its inaugural session last June.

Now, a group of states calling itself the "African Group" has submitted an alternative text that was prepared with no input from indigenous peoples. This text strips out all reference to "self-determination,"

and gives states complete control to determine who is indigenous. Further, it gives states, through their law-making powers, absolute power over indigenous peoples' lands and resources. In many other instances, indigenous peoples' rights are subordinated to "national laws" or the "national legal system."

This alternative text is the antithesis of what a human rights instrument is supposed to be: a backstop against arbitrary, harmful state action. The central purpose of the Declaration, as with all such human rights instruments, is to provide indigenous peoples with a measure of protection from such abuse. Instead the African Group proposes to retain the status quo ante by means of a process that utterly disrespects indigenous peoples, and the decades of efforts of both indigenous and governmental negotiators.

Madame President, we urge you not to submit the African Group proposal to the General Assembly. Rather, we urge you to use your good offices to help the African states understand that the Human Rights Council's text contains nothing that threatens state sovereignty or opportunity for development. To the contrary, it levels the playing field so that small, marginal, and in most cases impoverished indigenous communities can engage as citizens with the state without losing their identities or cultures. Rather than fuel conflict, it quiets the potential for

conflict by creating a framework for fair cooperation and respectful resolution of differences.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Ellen L. Lutz
Executive Director
Cultural Survival