



Pan-Tribal Confederacy of Indigenous Tribal Nations

The Only Multi-Racial Worldwide Indigenous Confederacy In Existence

Day 1 report from the OAS

Monday, November 30, 2009 9:21 PM

I am pleased to report that Diplomats in the overworked & understaffed OAS mission of the Republic of Guyana in Washington DC - STILL made the effort to attend the opening session of the 12th Meeting of Negotiations in the Quest for points of Consensus on the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (30 November - 2nd December 2009). Unfortunately, once again - these hardworking representatives of the Bharrat Jagdeo administration were the ONLY CARICOM member state in attendance; whilst all of Latin America, the USA and Canada WERE present as usual.

I grow weary of being asked by South, Central & North Americans (both Diplomats and fellow Indigenous Caucus members) "What's wrong with the Caribbean Governments? They are NEVER at these sessions - and 5 of those absent HAVE recognised Indigenous populations" (Belize, Suriname, Trinidad, St. Vincent & Dominica). I just shrug my shoulders and say "I don't really know why myself - because those 5 are very fond of using their Indigenous populations when it suits them, the typical disingenuous 'polytricks' as we call it in the Caribbean." - is MY answer.

In the days preceding the official opening the 6 members of the Caribbean Caucus voted to appoint Charles Williams of Dominica as the Caribbean Co-Chair on that 4 member body - which represents North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, all official regions of the Americas in these meetings.

Mrs. Josien Aloema Tokae - the Kalina representative from Suriname (one of 3 female members of our 6 person Caribbean sub-Caucus of the greater OAS Indigenous Caucus) read the opening statement this morning, which all of us had a hand in writing. The other members of the Caribbean Caucus at the twelfth meeting were Naniki Reyes-Ocasio - Taino from Boriken (mistakenly called Puerto-Rico), Maria Clkenis Tavarez - Taino from the Dominican Republic, Charles Williams - Kalinago from Dominica, Paul Lewis - Kalinago from St. Vincent, and Damon Corrie - Lokono from Barbados).

Two complete articles were approved by the OAS States' Ambassadors today after many hours of hard negotiations led by the 4 Co-Chairs of the Indigenous Caucus (Hector Huertas - Kuna Lawyer from Panama, June Lorenzo - Pueblo Lawyer from the USA, Jaime Arias - Indigenous Leader from Colombia & Charles Williams - Ex-Kalinago Chief from Dominica).

This twelfth meeting was made possible due to the financial support from the Governments of Spain and Nicaragua - the Ambassador from the latter very proudly announced today that the administration of President Daniel Ortega has officially recognized almost the entire eastern half of Nicaragua as Autonomous regions for the Indigenous peoples there - a step that is in full accordance with their recorded support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that was voted overwhelmingly for in the UN General Assembly in September 2007 - but virtually every country on the Earth EXCEPT the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The administration of President Evo Morales (himself an Indigenous person) of Bolivia was also the first and so far ONLY country to fully incorporate and implement the United Nations Declaration into the National Constitution of that country; it remains to be seen if all the other countries who were quick to support the UN Declaration in the General Assembly - when the lens of world's media was upon them - will finally back up their public show in 2007 with concrete actions (in 2010?) - following Bolivia's noble lead.

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Reporting from Washington DC, USA
November 30th 2009*

DAY 3 REPORT FROM OAS HQ - A CARICOM CONTROVERSY

Wednesday, December 2, 2009 10:40 AM

Today I am compelled to speak straight from my heart and pull no punches, let those in agreement - agree, and those who take offense - be offended.

CARICOM (the Caribbean Community member states) states are falling into the same damned trap they did in 2007 at the United Nations, back then when the UN General Assembly was ready to vote on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - the African and Caribbean States were in no position to vote PRECISELY BECAUSE the African and Caribbean States never bothered to participate in the process and so they did not have a clue as to what was going on; so they asked for a postponement of the General Assembly vote - so that they could educate themselves on a process THAT WAS ONGOING FOR OVER 20 YEARS!

After several unnecessary months more - the African States (dutifully followed by CARICOM States again) - decided to follow the rest of the world and support the UN Declaration. We thank them for that.

The negotiations between the member states of the OAS and the Indigenous Caucus of the Americas in drafting the American Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples - has been on-going for over a decade.

As of December 2nd 2009 on the final day of the 12th meeting for points of consensus, again the ONLY CARICOM member State showing any interest in this process is the OAS mission of the Republic of Guyana; and this is a trend that I have noted for the entire tenure of the Bharrat Jagdeo administration of Guyana. We thank them for that also.

Still, the question must be asked (and frequently is): "Why are the OAS Missions of CARICOM the ONLY ones that are NEVER present in these important negotiations - which will have a tremendous impact on whether future relations between the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, and the political states that sit in positions of power over them - will be 'equitable and harmonious' or 'unjust and adversarial'.

For goodness sake - the CARICOM OAS Missions are a mere one flight of stairs above where we are holding these meetings at OAS Headquarters - is it too much to ask that they follow Guyana's example and take a few steps outside of their offices and show some damned interest in the process?

Nearly all of them were outside our conference room door on Monday in the courtyard - but then again that was because a lunch and cocktail was being held and we all know how 'vastly more important' those sorts of affairs are...verily - I hang my head in shame.

If this deplorable trend of CARICOM states continues I predict the following will occur:

The OAS will bring the historic American Declaration Final version up for a consensus vote, CARICOM states will once again (as they did over at the UN) - stand out under a halo of their own ignorance of the subject in question - and be unable to come to any decision (Guyana being the sole exception to the 3-ring Circus).

As an Indigenous citizen of CARICOM - I am ashamed at the obvious contempt that the Caribbean Community (with the sole exception of Guyana) continues to demonstrate towards the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas.

What makes this blatantly discriminatory attitude ever worse is the fact that apart from Guyana (with the largest Indigenous population of CARICOM) there are five other CARICOM States that have internationally recognised Indigenous populations.

These states are:

BELIZE, SURINAME, St. VINCENT and TRINIDAD - ALL of which DO NOT even officially recognise in their constitutions the de-facto pre-Colombian origin and still existing presence of Indigenous Peoples - and still refuse IN VIOLATION OF NUMEROUS INTERNATIONAL LAWS AND CONVENTIONS to provide these cheated and neo-colonised but 'legal landlords' any official land titles whatsoever to THEIR OWN traditional lands and territories.

Dominica still denies the Kalinago-Carib People a simple copy of the land Title bequeathed them by the former British colonial power (is there something to hide?) or to accept a Kalinago-Carib Tribal Government request for an adequate and sustainable sized land area to inhabit with future generations in mind, and also still refuses to remove the illegal (by International Laws & conventions) unwanted and imposed State Police Force presence on the Carib Territory - or justly punish the State Police Force members who violate the rights of members of the Kalinago-Carib Community (including murder in one case).

Apart from these 3 ills - the Government of Dominica DOES at least recognise the de-facto existing CARIB TERRITORY and HAS gone so far as to issue the democratically elected Kalinago-Carib Chief with a Diplomatic Passport; and this is a very commendable and historic FIRST for the entire Hemisphere; perhaps even the entire world. We thank them for that as well.

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December 2nd 2009