



BRIEFING NOTE:

UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES (UNPFII17)

Seventeenth Session – New York, United States of America (USA): APRIL 17th – APRIL 21st, 2018.

April 22nd 2018.

United Nations (UN) Organizational Summary:

The “United Nations” (UN) is a global coalition of 193 Nations. The organization was established on October 24, 1945 after World War II with the aim of preventing another such conflict and promoting international dialogue. When started, the UN had 51 member states, there are now 193 and pending further inclusion/participation of Indigenous Nations.

The UN has several permanent headquarters stationed internationally, its most notable in Manhattan, New York City, with other main offices situated in Geneva, Nairobi, and Vienna.

The UN is an global intergovernmental organization tasked to promote international cooperation and to create and maintain international order. It’s objectives include maintaining international peace and security, promoting human rights (including Indigenous Rights), foster social and economic development, protecting the environment, and providing humanitarian aid in cases of famine, natural disaster, and armed conflicts.

Executive Summary: 17th United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Thousands of representatives of Indigenous peoples and Nations from all over the world gathered in New York, NY, to attend the 17th annual United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). This year, the forum will make recommendations on “Indigenous Peoples Collective Rights to Land, Territories and Resources” – among other regular duties of the Permanent Forum, such as updating the International community and the Standing Committee on the progress of Member states (including Canadas) implementation of the United Nations

Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) – (*UNANIMOUSLY Endorsed and Adopted by the Metis Settlements General Council Assembly, November 2016¹*) and various other international mechanisms for the recognition of Indigenous rights.

On April 3rd, 2018 the MSGC, following inquiry, was notified that Canada was attending the 17th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in New York and that there was an opportunity for the MSGC to attend with the Canadian delegation and on behalf of the Metis Settlements.

The discussion of this opportunity was brought to the MSGC Board of Directors on April 6th 2018 and the board agreed that the President and Director of Public Affairs were to attend the 17th session of the UNPFII at the United Nations in New York, NY, USA from April 17th – 21st 2018.

Arrangements were made and proposed submissions and statements were submitted to the Standing Committee and its Chair for MSGC to be on the placed on the speakers list and to have our concerns duly noted in the official record and registrar (Center for Documentation, Research and Information²)

The theme of the Seventeenth session was Indigenous Peoples Collective Rights to Land, Territories and Resources – full agenda attached hereto (Appendix A).

Questions asked:

- 1) Has your institution been engaged in work relating to Indigenous peoples collective rights to lands, territories and resources.
- 2) What are the 3-5 main activities carried out by your institution at the national and/or regional level to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the principles contained there in.
- 3) Has your institution been engaged in work relating to the development or implementation of national action plans, strategies or other measures to achieve the ends of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- 4) What are the main constitutional, legislative and/or administrative developments taken or planned to promote and/or implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in your country? Has your institution been involved in these processes.

Each day of the forum, the Standing Committee invites Indigenous Nations and Member States to begin dialogue on the days agenda item. The organization of work is proposed as one item per day with global committee representatives also present. This process takes into consideration Indigenous Nations perspectives on critical global issues pertaining to Indigenous peoples but

¹ MSGC Assembly November 2016 – A regular Motion: “To Adopt UNDRIP in its Entirety”

² Official Permanent Record of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: <https://www.docip.org/en/> DOA: April April 22nd, 2018.

also reports on the status of Members States, including Canada, in their treatments of Indigenous Nations and groups such as the MSGC. The committee selects the organizations (Speakers) to the agenda points prior to the meeting being called to order and posts the Speakers list one hour prior to the session and allowing for statements of three minutes in conjunction with submitting the statement in writing – the MSGC was able to intervene several times throughout (statements attached hereto – appendix B).

MSGC was fortunate to be selected 3 times by the Committee Chair and was able to present verbally twice and submitted all statements in writing to the DOCIP (UN-Documentation Office). On April 18th 2018, the MSGC was selected as 18th Speaker of the days session but due to time consideration the Chair called the meeting to end at speaker 16th; the MSGC was still able to submit our statement in writing to DOCIP.

The presentations were recorded live and broadcast internationally in various languages from the United Nations communications service, allowing for the global audience to observe³.

The Metis Settlements message focused predominantly on the lack of recognition and respect on behalf of the Canadian Government in consideration of the Metis Settlements, furthermore the MSGC presented to the international community our peoples history and uniqueness. The MSGC interventions called on member states and Canada to further action in light of its failure to abide by the outcome documents of 2014 that the United Nations General Assembly adopted under Resolution 69/2: which called on member states to respect Indigenous governments and system when dealing with matters that pertain to their Indigenous interest. Sections 20/21/26 of the General Assembly Outcome Documents (Resolution 69/2-2014) called on member states to recognize Indigenous Peoples representative Institutions – MSGC intervened to state our arising concerns with Canadas efforts to discuss Metis related issues with select groups, such as the Metis National Council (MNC) and its affiliates (MNBC/MNA/MNS/MMF/MNO). Our message, simply put, is that Canada is picking and choosing as to whom they talk to, and that the Metis Settlements have been left out of critical dialogue pertaining to our collective future. The MSGC presented matters of our Settlements current reality as-well as highlighted our needs and desires for greater Self Governance as Canadian governments (Province of Alberta) still retains large aspects of control (*Metis Settlements Act – Ministerial Powers*). The MSGC addressed member states and Indigenous Nations on our loss of lands, resources, mines and mineral etc, (Article 26-UNDRIP) and the failure of the Canadian governments to recognize all of our traditional lands and to entrenched their protection in the Canadian Constitution.

³United Nations, Digital Record and Broadcast Service: <http://webtv.un.org> 2018.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS:

- 1) Metis Settlements made history! Our introduction to the World Stage allows the MSGC to build a global reputation as Indigenous leaders in the areas of: land protections, good governance, and rights – allowing us to pressure domestic governments
- 2) Invitation to meet with the Senate Committee by Chair Hon. Lilian Eva Dyck, Saskatchewan Senator and Mary Jane McCallum, Manitoba Senator)
- 3) MSGC was able to review our federal negotiations with other Indigenous Nations who are also participating in the framework negotiations with Canada – MSGC brought forward our concerns of state discrimination with Canada’s federal Ministry of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA) along with their senior negotiations officials
- 4) Invitation to meet with “Amnesty International Canada” (Global Human Rights Surveyor)
- 5) Invitation extended to Canadian senior negotiation officials (Sen. ADM Joe Wild) to once again meet with the MSGC on the topic of Provincial Engagement in our Negotiations

