



The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Navajo Council members attend U.N. meeting in Canada

Navajo Nation plays a leading role in the advocacy for indigenous people

VANCOUVER, British Columbia – The Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan (Iyanbito/Pinedale), Navajo Council Delegates Ervin Keeswood (Tse Daan Kaan), and Rex Lee Jim (Rock Point) attended a preparatory meeting with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) recently, which was the seventh session for the North America Region.

The delegation continued the Navajo Nation's participation at the international level to voice concerns in preparation of another forum scheduled in April or May in New York City.

Forty other participants joined the Navajo delegation to focus on this year's theme of "Climate Change, Bio-cultural Diversity and Livelihoods," which is considered the stewardship role of indigenous people facing new challenges.

Speaker Morgan stated that "the Navajo Nation must be at the table to continue our dialogue with the world community. Through these efforts, we (the Navajo Nation) are able to share those concerns that affect the Navajos and invariably the world. Moreover, the Navajo people offer their unique insights and understanding to regional and world issues."

Morgan complimented the work of Delegates Keeswood and Jim, who have been at the forefront of international issues on behalf of the Navajo Nation since the 1990s.

At the session, Keeswood and Jim made comments to the assembly on behalf of the Navajo Nation.

The group recognized that the U.N.'s Framework Convention on Climate Change established a formal structure for active, direct, and full participation of indigenous peoples within the official decision-making process.

The forum also made note of the concerns of indigenous people in South America, regarding their concerns over the privatization of their forests. The group also encouraged that participants of the forum take a position to stand against the reducing emissions from deforestation, and the reducing of emissions from deforestation and degradation.

Forum participants also advocated for a moratorium on new exploration for the extraction of coal, natural gas, and oil within the nearby indigenous lands of South America, especially in culturally, environmentally, historically, socially, and spiritually significant areas.

It was recommended that this moratorium remain in force until certain mechanisms can be established to ensure the protection of air, land, water resources, and indigenous rights.

The group at the forum is now requesting a meeting with the Secretary and Chair of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to seek support for

indigenous people from all regions of the world. The group will advocate for the promotion of the establishment of in-session workshops to facilitate discussions on the effects of climate change on indigenous peoples. These workshops will also include indigenous knowledge, culture, ecosystems, social values, and spirituality in all aspects and stages of the assessment process.

The work from this session will continue on April 21 to May 2 at the U.N. headquarters in New York City.

For more information, contact Joshua Lavar Butler with the Office of the Speaker at 928-871-6384.

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