



United Confederation of Taíno People Regional Coordinating Office

To: Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Division for Social Policy and Development,
Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
Room DC2-1772, United Nations, New York, NY 10017
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Ta'kahi Guaitiao (Greetings Relatives):

On behalf of the Taíno People and Nation represented by the United Confederation of Taíno People (UCTP), I am writing in response to the call for comments and suggestions for a comprehensive program of action for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

As the UCTP has noted from the communication of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which is home to the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, "In proclaiming the Second Decade as of 1 January 2005, the General Assembly, inter alia, decided that the goal of the Decade should be the further strengthening of international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous peoples in such areas as culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and economic and social development, by means of action-oriented programmes and specific projects, increased technical assistance and relevant standard-setting activities."

With this in mind, the UCTP submits the following with hope for the full inclusion and participation of not only indigenous Taíno People but all Caribbean Indigenous Peoples found within the Circum-Caribbean region without discrimination.

As the UCTP is an international Tribal Authority serving citizens of the Taíno, Carib, and Arawak Nations located throughout the Greater and Lesser Antilles as well as the Diaspora, it considers the proclamation of the Second Decade as well as the call for comments and suggestions for a comprehensive program of action a priority issue. With this communication to Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII), the UCTP is officially requesting to be kept informed of all developments concerning the Second Decade and its soon to be developed programme of activities. Of particular interest to the UCTP is being made aware of any and all opportunities to highlight the unique situations of Taíno and other Caribbean Indigenous Peoples with the United Nations System.

As the contemporary Taíno, Carib and Arawak Peoples are the direct descendents of ancient aboriginal peoples who populated the Caribbean Islands and surrounding region into the continent from time immemorial, it is the position of the UCTP that as is the right of all Peoples and Nations, Caribbean Indigenous Peoples have should have the opportunity to exercise the right to self-determination and participate directly within the United Nations system. This participation should, without discrimination, include not only those Caribbean indigenous communities, which now find themselves within United Nations Member States but also those indigenous peoples who reside within non-self governing territories (eg. Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands etc).

Further, the UCTP recalls previous resolutions on the First International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, as well as those of the Commission on Human Rights, and urges the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) to pay particular attention to the unique situation of Caribbean Indigenous Peoples (including those in non-self governing territories), and:

- 1.) Promote the importance of consultation and cooperation with Caribbean Indigenous Peoples in planning and implementing the programme of activities for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous,
- 2.) Promote the need for adequate financial support from the international community, including support from within the United Nations and the specialized agencies, and the need for adequate coordination and communication channels for Caribbean Indigenous Peoples,
- 3.) Encourage the CARICOM and the Association of Caribbean States to consider contributing, to the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, in support of the achievement of the goals of the Second Decade,
- 4.) Encourage Governments, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to support the Decade by identifying resources for activities designed to implement the goals of the Decade, in cooperation with Caribbean Indigenous Peoples and organizations such as the UCTP, COIP, GOIP, and the Indigenous Peoples Caucus of the Greater Caribbean, and
- 5.) Promote the need to establish transparent national committees or other mechanisms to ensure that the objectives and activities of the Second Decade are planned and implemented on the basis of full partnership with Caribbean Indigenous Peoples and organizations.

To assist in the implementation of these initiatives, the UCTP recommends that the PFII:

- 1.) Include representatives of Caribbean indigenous organizations in any planned regional consultations focusing on Latin American and the Caribbean, as well as any steering committees established for the planning of such initiatives, and
- 2.) Give serious consideration to organizing a special regional consultative session focusing on the unique situation of Caribbean Indigenous Peoples, which would take place in the Caribbean islands hosted by a State Government and a local Indigenous Community on an indigenous territory. These consultative sessions should include Caribbean Indigenous Peoples who reside in non-self governing territories, without discrimination and adequate funding should be provided for their participation.¹

In closing, the UCTP would like to say bo'matum (thank you) for your time and consideration and looks forward to strengthening our relationship with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as well as other UN Agencies and Programmes.

Oma'bahari (With Respect),
Roberto Múcaro Borrero,
President and Chairman,
UCTP – Regional Coordinating Office

¹ The UCTP would urge that the special situation of Caribbean Indigenous Peoples who reside outside their traditional homelands be addressed as an official agenda item of any special consultative sessions as the Diaspora (urban and rural) populations need to be considered and included in this dialogue.