



24<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
(April 22, 2025)

*AGENDA ITEM 3: Discussion on the theme “Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples within United Nations Member States and the United Nations system, including identifying good practices and addressing challenges*

Statement Presented by: Principal Chief Lora Ann Chaisson, NCAI Regional Vice President

STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS  
AND THE NATIVE AMERICAN RIGHTS FUND

Thank you, Madam Chair. My name is Lora Ann Chaisson and I am the Principal Chief of the United Houma Nation. I speak on behalf of the National Congress of American Indians and the Native American Rights Fund.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms the *minimum* standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous Peoples worldwide. Since its adoption, it has positively influenced the drafting of several constitutions and statutes at the national and local levels, and contributed to the progressive development of international and national legal frameworks, jurisprudence, and policies. Great progress has also been made within the UN Human Rights Council, including through the establishment of dialogues with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a standing modality for Indigenous participation in these dialogues, and the appointment of an Indigenous co-facilitator for Human Rights Council negotiations.

While positive steps have been taken to implement the Declaration, more deliberate, sustained, and inclusive action is needed to fully realize the ends of the Declaration, ensuring Indigenous Peoples’ representative institutions are full and effective contributors to UN decision making bodies. Toward that end, we respectfully urge the Forum to recommend that:

- (1) the Human Rights Council consider extending the standing modality of participation for Indigenous Peoples in the interactive dialogues with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples (EMRIP) to other relevant dialogues and discussions to strengthen the direct participation of Indigenous Peoples in its work;

- (2) the high-level panel to be held during the eighty-second session of the General Assembly in 2027 reflect the level of ambition, substance, and impact befitting a high-level plenary meeting. As such, it must align with the original recommendations of the Permanent Forum, and must not serve as a platform to reconsider or undermine the established recognition and institutionalization of the rights of Indigenous Peoples; and
- (3) Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions be ensured full and effective participation in the planning, design, and conduct of the 2027 high-level panel, in accordance with Articles 18 and 41 of the Declaration.

Finally, we urge Member States to redouble efforts to realize the right of self-determination for Indigenous Peoples by ensuring the central role of Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions in all decision-making processes that impact their communities, lands, territories, resources, and future, taking urgent and immediate action to fully implement the Declaration in partnership with Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**SUGGESTED UNPFII RECOMMENDATION TEXT:** The Forum urges (1) the Human Rights Council to extend the standing modality of participation for Indigenous Peoples in the interactive dialogues with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) to other relevant dialogues; (2) the 2027 high-level panel reflect the ambition, substance, and impact of a plenary meeting, aligned with the Permanent Forum's original recommendations, and does not serve to undermine established rights of Indigenous Peoples; and (3) the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions in all stages of the 2027 high-level panel's planning and conduct.