



Intervention by the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (Consultative Status with ECOSOC)

Speaker: Councillor Anne Dennis

Item 9: Enhancing the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the United Nations

Thank you Madam Chair.

My name is Anne Dennis, I am a Councillor for the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council and I am a proud Gamilaraay woman.

NSWALC welcomes the continued work to enhance the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the United Nations and reminds Member States that this is not a new aspiration. It is a commitment made at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples more than a decade ago and one that now requires implementation.

We therefore recommend:

1. a clear roadmap and timeline for the implementation of enhanced participation;
2. formal recognition of Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions within United Nations processes;
3. a single, streamlined, accessible and transparent accreditation and registration process across relevant United Nations mechanisms;
4. dedicated and sustainable funding for Indigenous participation, including support for preparation, coordination and follow-through; and

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5. mechanisms that ensure Indigenous participation directly influences deliberations and outcomes.

Madam Chair,

Participation must be meaningful, not symbolic.

The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council has held Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1998 and has participated across the United Nations system, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights Council processes and other international human rights mechanisms.

Our experience demonstrates both the value of Indigenous participation and the practical barriers that continue to limit it.

Too often, participating in the United Nations requires Indigenous organisations to navigate complex and burdensome accreditation and registration systems that would challenge even the most experienced institutions. Participation should not depend on an organisation's ability to navigate bureaucratic processes.

The costs of travel, accommodation, staffing and preparation also remain significant barriers. Too often, participation is determined not by who should be at the table, but by who can afford to be there.

NSWALC has recently paused its participation in Australia's national Close the Gap framework because commitments to partnership and shared decision-making are increasingly not being matched by

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practice. This demonstrates why meaningful participation cannot simply be procedural.

States cannot credibly champion enhanced participation internationally while failing to practise meaningful participation with Indigenous Peoples at home.

More than a decade after Member States committed to enhancing Indigenous participation, Indigenous Peoples should not still be asking whether enhanced participation will occur. We should be discussing how and when it will be implemented.

The time for implementation is now.

As we say in Australia: nothing about us, without us.

Thank you.

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