



United Confederation of Taíno People

• Borikén (Puerto Rico) • Kiskeia (Dominican Republic) • Barbados •
• Bimini (United States) • St. Thomas • Kuba

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1/21/2016

To: United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Via email

Re: Submission to UNPFII 2016 Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages

Takahi ituno kena atiaono (Greetings sisters and brothers):

On behalf of the United Confederation of Taíno People (UCTP), I would like to extend our solidarity to Indigenous Peoples and others gathered at the Expert Meeting on Indigenous Languages taking place at United Nations Headquarters from 19-21 January 2016.

The UCTP represents Taíno and other Caribbean Indigenous Peoples throughout the region and in the U.S. as the traditional territory of the Taíno Peoples extended into the southern region of the State of Florida, which we call Bimini.

The UCTP participated in the first UNPFII Expert Meeting on Indigenous Languages in 2008 submitting a statement (PFII/2008/EGM1/18) including recommendations. We are pleased to see the Word Conference on the Information Society (WSIS) was referenced in advance of this meeting as the UCTP recommended this consideration in 2008. However, since our intervention in 2008, the UCTP has not received assistance from any State or the UN System with regard to our language revitalization efforts even as remaining indigenous languages in the circum-Caribbean region continue to be endangered or no longer spoken.

Since our earlier statement and specifically with regard to initiatives and strategies undertaken to recover, use, revitalize, and distribute indigenous languages, the UCTP has undertaken several initiatives focusing on the indigenous Taino language such as:

1. The ongoing development of a Taino Dictionary developed by and for Taino Peoples.
2. An online "Taino Word of the Day" project distributed via Face Book and other internet based sources.
3. An online language group entitled "Taino Language Forum" on Facebook, with over 1100 subscribers.



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With this in mind, and after a review of the documents posted at the UNPFII website, including the Programme of Work, the UCTP submits the following for consideration, distribution, and inclusion in these historic deliberations and final report.

The UCTP recommends:

1. An International Day and Year of Indigenous Languages. Further, Caribbean Indigenous Peoples, including those of territorial possessions in the region, should be included in all phases of future work toward these goals.
2. States, the United Nations System, and Indigenous Peoples develop and or strengthen programs aimed at promoting the empowerment of indigenous languages through all communication mediums, including radio, television, film, and internet technologies.
3. Funding support mechanisms for projects focusing on indigenous languages should be inclusive of Caribbean based indigenous initiatives, as well as similar projects in its Diaspora. Funding mechanism should not only be directed to endangered languages but also to those projects seeking to revive languages no longer spoken.

In closing, we say Hahom (thank you) for your attention.

Oma bahari, nabori'daka (With respect, I am at your service),

Roberto Múkaro Agüeibaná Borrero

Roberto Múkaro Agüeibaná Borrero,
President, United Confederation of Taino People;
Kasike, Taino iukaieke Guainia