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New York City**

**Statement of the National Indian Health Board
Before the
United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous
Issues**

**Remarks Delivered by Nickolaus Lewis, Vice Chairman of the
National Indian Health Board and Councilman, Lummi Tribal
Nation**

With

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Good Afternoon Chairperson, Members of the Forum and honorable guests. My name is Nickolaus Lewis, I am the Vice Chairman of the National Indian Health Board and the Secretary of the Lummi Tribal Nation Council.

The National Indian Health Board is the Tribally created NGO that serves as the unified, national voice for all 574 Federally Recognized Tribes to ensure the government upholds its Trust Responsibility for the health and public health of our Peoples.

The National Indian Health Board is pleased be part of this meeting.

Colonization provides the world's Indigenous Peoples with shared history. That is a legacy of loss: Lost land, lost lives, lost language, lost culture, lost health and indigenous ways of achieving and sustaining health.

Through the Doctrine of Discovery, which set the foundation of land theft and life loss for Indigenous Peoples worldwide, through policies to remove Native culture by scrubbing indigenous identities from our children through the forced Boarding School policies.

We gained a shared legacy of trauma that persists inter-generationally. The methods and policies of colonization remain so effective that their legacy and current impact endures.

In fact, regardless of political realities, whether oppressive or generous, Indigenous Peoples share the same poor health outcomes. These health disparities and pervasive systems of inequity rely on a persistent cultural erasure. Broken promises and political marginalization. It is the colonizer's playbook.

We are aware that the World Health Organization is implementing, through the Pan American Health Organization, a Policy on Ethnicity and Health.

And while this endeavor has opened doors to work with indigenous communities throughout the Americas, we need something different. We strongly encourage the UN to consider working directly and collaboratively with Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples in all regions of the world to develop of a more responsive and relevant indigenous approach.

The objective would be to achieve health equity. We must overcome inter-generational trauma as a product of colonization, opening the possibility of healing and creating paths toward achieving the highest standards of health. We must promote self determination. Further, the endeavor would stand on the commitment to restore, empower and honor Indigenous knowledge, culture and traditional healing practices and concepts of health.

In conclusion, when this body considers its priority areas of work, we strongly urge you to make the health and public health issues of the World's indigenous Peoples a top and urgent priority. We stand ready to support this work and move all of our Peoples toward cultural healing and achieving the highest health status possible.

Hy'shq'e Si'am e ne schleche.

Thank you my dear friends and relatives.