

**INVITATION TO
THE ROUNDTABLE ON THE PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE PEOPLES OF
DROWNED LANDS
July 18-19, 2014
Honolulu, Hawai'i
Sponsored by
International Institute for Indigenous Resource Management, and
Indigenous Peoples Climate Change Working Group**

Background: Several presentations at the April 7-8, 2014 meeting of the Indigenous Peoples Climate Change Working Group provided heartbreaking details of the impacts of rising sea levels on native peoples. Their lands are being drowned. Tribal leaders from the Louisiana coast told of their constant battle to fend off or delay the inevitable effects of rising sea levels. Native leaders from the Arctic told similar stories about coastal and island Alaskan Villages. Representatives of NOAA recounted the nearly identical testimonies of the peoples of Tuvalu, Kiribati, and other Pacific Island nations.

From these stories it was evident that the climate battles being waged by native peoples are being fought alone using local assets and applying localized tactics.

Proposal: The proposed International Association of the Peoples of Drowned Lands is based on the proposition that these widespread, localized battles are all part of an overall war, and as such, requires not only the application of local assets and local tactics, but also alliances, grand strategy, and coordinated approaches.

The Roundtable venue in Honolulu is yet to be determined. However, we are working with NOAA to hold the Roundtable at their offices in Honolulu. The Roundtable will engage indigenous leaders, educators, scientists, government officials, and others in a series of facilitated dialogues to identify and examine the advantages the proposed International Association of the Peoples of Drowned Lands can bring to bear on the efforts of indigenous peoples to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of a rapidly changing climate. The Roundtable will start at 8:30 a.m. on July 18 and end at 12:30 p.m. on July 19.

Roundtable participants will identify and examine issues related to the following themes. These questions are illustrative and not intended to be an exhaustive list of issues to be discussed.

- **E pluribus 'Ohana.** What advantages accrue to an alliance that can coordinate the framing of issues and adaptation/mitigation strategies? Given the disparate political underpinnings of the lands and peoples involved, what should such an alliance look like? How should it be governed? How can information technologies be utilized to build a trusted network to support coordinated approaches?
- **Lest we forget.** Michel-Rolph Trouillot, in his "Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History" argues "that there is the more serious task of determining not what history is . . . but how history works. For what history is changes with time and place, or better said, history reveals itself only through the production of specific narratives. What matters most are the process and conditions of production of such narratives." Can an alliance assist native peoples identify and negotiate those processes and conditions? How? One such process is the ritualization or sacralization of memory. What are other

processes and conditions? What are the historical, scientific, archaeological, social, cultural, political, legal, and other underpinnings of such ritualization or sacralization of memory? What systems and work are required to establish those underpinnings?

- **Lest others forget.** At the outset, the ritualization or sacralization of memory appropriately results in place-based or group-based phenomena—songs, dances, ceremonies, and the like. Can these local phenomena be incorporated into a coordinated, pan-native communications strategy? Is such a strategy desirable? What are some elements of that strategy? What systems are needed to carry out that strategy?
- **We're still here.** Notwithstanding the impacts rising sea levels and erosion have on, among other things, the built infrastructure, agriculture, and fisheries, the power of place makes it difficult for native peoples to completely abandon their homes. Much of the adaptation discussions have a decidedly FEMA cast and have primarily focused on emergency response, hardening of infrastructure, business continuation and relocation. What are other adaptation issues that should be addressed? For example, we are concerned that the failure to define and institutionalize the terms by which diasporic populations will be re-engaged, including social remittances, may weaken the social fabric and result in a less resilient society. We have already seen this dynamic occur as urban Indians and college graduates attempt to reintegrate into tribal society.
- **We'll be back.** What rights do indigenous peoples have in submerged or eroded lands? What rights of return do they have? What roles do treaties, international law, national and sub-national laws play? How is the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially Article 8-2(b) & (c) and Article 10, implicated? Is there a role the International Association of the Peoples of Drowned Lands can play? If so, what? What systems and work are required to define and protect such rights?

The Roundtable will be facilitated/moderated by Mervyn L. Tano of the International Institute for Indigenous Resource Management.

If you plan to participate, please send the following information to mervtano@iiirm.org.

- Name
- Company/Organization/Institution
- Address
- Phone number
- Email address
- Social Security Account Number
- And for non-US nationals, a photocopy of your passport

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