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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Forth Session, May 16 - 27 May, 2005
Agenda Item: Future Work and the Activities for the 2nd Decade

Oral Statement by the International Indian Treaty Council, the International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development, the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations Canada, the Indigenous Environmental Network, Frente por la Democracia y el Desarrollo-Coalición Campesina Indígena del Istmo de Oaxaca, Mexico and the Fundación para la Promoción del Conocimiento Indígena, Panama,

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

Throughout this 4th Session of the Permanent Forum, as well as all other previous sessions, we have seen a large number of Indigenous Peoples delegations voice profound concern on the ongoing and pervasive violation of Indigenous Peoples' right to land, territory and natural resources. This concern has extended to violations of treaties and agreements that memorialize these rights in some States. During the discussions of the Millennium Development Goals particularly, the loss of lands, territories and natural resources has been identified as the primary source of the extreme poverty and hunger in our communities.

Indigenous Peoples' right to their traditional lands, territories and natural resources, as well as the full, good faith observance of treaties and agreements between Indigenous Peoples and States memorializing this right, is the foundation of all other of our collective rights, including the right to self determination and the right to development, and is the basis for our physical, economic, social, cultural and spiritual survival. Indigenous Peoples' inherent and inalienable right to their lands, territories and natural resources fully encompasses the mandate of the Permanent Forum itself, and are the source of the critical issues facing Indigenous Peoples today, such as the loss of forests, water and traditional knowledge.

We therefore propose that the 4th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommend to ECOSOC that the theme and focus of the 6th session of the Permanent Forum in 2007 be "Lands, Territories, Treaties and Agreements," and that it become a fixed agenda item of the Permanent Forum.

With regard to activities for the 2nd Decade for Indigenous Peoples, we were disappointed that the High Commissioner for Human Rights did not continue in the role of coordinator of this Decade. Although we have confidence that DESA will fulfill its important role as Coordinator of the Decade, the work and experience done in the First Decade by the High Commissioner and the Office of the High Commissioner, should not be minimized or lost. Much important work was begun during the First Decade that remains to be completed.

We therefore recommend that the Permanent Forum recommend to ECOSOC that it invite DESA to form a full and effective partnership with the Office of the High

Commissioner, along with other relevant UN Subsidiary Bodies and Agencies that they may identify, to coordinate the activities of the Decade in order that the Indigenous Peoples of the World get closer to achieving the promise of these two important Decades.

Madame Chairperson, we would also address the issue of previous Permanent Forum recommendations and their follow-up:

Recalling its recommendations made to the World Bank at previous sessions, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues registers its profound disappointment in the final and recently adopted Operational Policy OP 4.10 and Bank Procedure BP 4.10, due to be implemented on July 1, 2005. The Permanent Forum recommends to ECOSOC that the World Bank not implement this policy and procedure on July 1, 2005, and reconsider their adoption in the light of their severe effects on the collective and individual human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples. In order to fulfill its mission of, as they themselves say, "poverty reduction and sustainable development in a manner that truly respects the dignity, human rights, economies and cultures of Indigenous Peoples," the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommends that the World Bank require the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples on World Bank projects that affect them, and prohibit under any and all circumstances the forced relocation of Indigenous Peoples and their communities in the furtherance of World Bank projects.

for all our relations,

Thank you, Madame Chairperson.