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Agenda item 4<sup>b</sup> 19.5.2003- Health: *Lucy Mulenkei*

By Indigenous Peoples Caucus Commission on Sustainable Development.

*Lucy Mulenkei-African Indigneous Women's Organization and Indigneous Women's Organization*

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I am making this intervention on behalf of the Indigenous Caucus on sustainable development. Two weeks ago we meet in the same room here during the 11th session on the commission on sustainable development. To us we came together as a follow up of WSSD. Reaffirming our committements to the Kimberly Declaration, our Johanesburg plan of Implementation and our working together for better health and environment for our Indigneous Peoples all over the world.

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. Every Human Being has a right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The enjoyment of this right is vital to life and well-being and ability to participate in all areas of public and private life. Unfortunately, It is not the case for many Indigenous Peoples especially in developing countries.

Poverty, access to health facilities and basic medical care, access to fresh drinking water and poor Governance by our policy makers have denied our Indigenous Peoples the right to health care. Mr. Chairman, there can be no sustainable development without addressing human and environmental health. The two are closely related. The wide spread proliferation of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and other toxic in the atmosphere, water, soil, ecosystem mining activities present a critical threat to Indigenous Peoples health.

HIV/AIDS has become one of the worst diseases of our times. Indigenous Peoples have not been spared. They are worst hit because they have been marginalized in awareness creation, luck of financial support and

participation in activities that will eradicate poverty. Lack of collective and correct data to tell the extend of effect of HIV/AIDS and other related diseases like Tb, Malaria, child mortality, Water borne diseases, and others prevents the successful intervention of tackling the health problems.

The Utilization and protection of our traditional healing systems within our communities must be given due and equitable recognition. The vital role played by Indigenous Women as bearers of traditional knowledge is very important and we are committed to provide high priority to health protection of our women, children and youth giving particular attention to prevention measure, health education, access to basic and primary heath, research and information.

#### Recommendations;

1. We call on governments and industry to ensure comprehensive and participatory assessment of mining activities that incorporate environmental, social, cultural and health impact assessment.
2. Indigenous Peoples must be fully involved. We can only fight HIV/AIDS by working together with financial institutions becoming partners by providing finance for our health projects, programmes and initiatives.
3. We demand effective participation in the planning, implementation and monitoring of national and international health policies, programmes and services.
4. International institution and Governments should participate in the construction of plural model of public health which validates our traditional knowledge, healers, innovations and practices.
5. We recommend that Financial institutions, international NGOs, Governments provide funding to undertake a collective data on health in areas occupied by Indigenous Peoples. This will go a long way to asst in identifying the critical health needs of Indigenous peoples especially in Africa, Asia, the pacific and Latin America
6. We recommend strongly the efforts to address Environmental, and health Impact assessment before any activities are undertaken in Indigenous peoples land as one of the human rights requirements
7. Indigenous peoples should be fully involved in decision making at all levels-planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.
8. Governments and the United Nations should work together to stop conflict and war in the world and especially in some countries habited

by Indigenous Peoples. These conflicts do nothing by destroy the peace, and creates fear and limits movements.

9. We must work all together collectively to ensure the achievement of the millennium goals for they are the only hope for our good health to sustainable development.
10. Awareness and capacity building is very important in helping the indigenous Peoples have their own copying mechanism.
11. That ECOSOC request WHO, UNDP, PAHO and other regional health organizations, all UN agencies and other Partners addressing the health issues outline global strategy on the health of marginalized Populations to asses the needs of indigenous peoples.