

**STATEMENT BY
REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CAUCUS**

4 September 2007

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will be considered by the United Nations General Assembly, before the end of its 61st session.*

The Steering Committee has been informed and presented with an agreement negotiated between the Africa Group of States and the Co-sponsoring States for adoption of the Declaration including nine amendments. The Steering Committee has formed its response on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples in the short timeframe available to us to inform and seek responses from Indigenous Peoples.

We provided to Indigenous Peoples the modified version of the Declaration, for their consideration, and asked their opinions on this Declaration and whether it is supported or opposed. Where possible we have tried to clarify the amendments and to provide interpretative assistance.

In these communications, many of the Indigenous Peoples supported the adoption of the amended Declaration. Many others took the position not to oppose the adoption of the Declaration. Some felt strongly that they should not be bound by the process and emphasized the right of Indigenous Peoples to decide our own arrangements in our own timeframe.

However of most significance is the level of support received from Indigenous Peoples for States to introduce this modified Declaration for adoption, based upon the many important provisions preserved in the Declaration.

We therefore make the following decisions:

- 1 The Steering Committee endorses that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as modified, be adopted. This endorsement is conditional upon the assurances that any further proposals to amend the Declaration will be opposed by the Africa Group of States and the Co-sponsoring States.
- 2 We now call upon all State members of the United Nations to support the adoption of the Declaration, as contained in the Annex to Resolution†, by consensus. The level of support given to this Declaration by the voting members of the United Nations will demonstrate the degree of commitment and good faith by the international community for the implementation of this standard, upholding and implementing the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

* The 61st Session of the UN General Assembly ends on 17 September 2007. Consideration of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is scheduled for 13 September 2007.

†The Resolution Number is yet to be identified, but this is a reference to the amended Declaration as agreed between the Africa Group of States and the Co-sponsoring States