

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Indigenous Peoples' Caucus Regional Steering Committee
13 September 2007

*UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTS
THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES*

New York, New York

Today, the United Nations General Assembly, the highest body of the United Nations system, in an historic session adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, after more than 20 years of intensive negotiations between nation-states and Indigenous Peoples.

The vote won with an overwhelming majority in favour, 143 with only 4 negative votes cast (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United States) and 11 abstentions (Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, Columbia, Georgia, Kenya, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Samoa, Ukraine).

Indigenous peoples from around the world, many of whom have worked tirelessly for the adoption of the Declaration since its inception, were present to witness its passage at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

As Les Malezer, Chair of the Global Indigenous Peoples' Caucus states: "*The Declaration does not represent solely the viewpoint of the United Nations, nor does it represent solely the viewpoint of the Indigenous Peoples. It is a Declaration which combines our views and interests and which sets the framework for the future. It is a tool for peace and justice, based upon mutual recognition and mutual respect.*"

Attached please find the Indigenous Peoples' Global Caucus Statement, as well as Regional Caucus Statements, in regards to the Declaration's adoption.

As many of the Indigenous Leaders will still be in NYC available for comment, please contact the regional coordinators listed below to locate specific persons or to set up media responses from particular regions.

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