



# Cultural Survival

*Promoting the human rights and cultural autonomy of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities since 1972*



## Working Group on Indigenous Populations July 22 - 26, 2002

### Statement by Larry Childs, Ethnosphere Coordinator, Cultural Survival, Inc., USA

Thank you for providing this opportunity to address the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. As an international human rights organization dedicated to promoting and advocating the rights and cultural autonomy of indigenous peoples for the last 30 years, Cultural Survival has and continues to play an important role in the indigenous movement. My purpose today is to describe our work, review our exciting plans for the future and especially invite the participation of indigenous delegates and supporting organizations. We carry out our mission through three programming areas: development of education programs and materials, direct support for projects with indigenous communities and dissemination of our research and publications. To most effectively and accurately promote the voices and issues of indigenous peoples we are guided by a vast network of indigenous colleagues and experts.

Recently, we have started to take far greater advantage of communication and information technologies for networking, gathering and organizing information, and disseminating information. We are also entering into collaborative agreements with educational institutions, global networks and media organizations that will bring greater public awareness to the real issues and concerns of indigenous peoples. As a part of this initiative we are framing indigenous issues in a broader global context in which loss of culture or violation of rights results in not only the suffering of those who have been violated, but a real threat to all of humanity and our collective hopes and dreams for the future.

### **Ethnosphere Initiative Concept & Description**

This expansion of our programs is driven through the Ethnosphere Initiative - an endeavor that starts by housing on the Internet an unparalleled, continually renewed source of reliable information about and for endangered indigenous and un-represented peoples. The ethnosphere celebrates the richness and diversity of indigenous cultures and lifeways, but also identifies threats to this diversity and successes in addressing the threats. It challenges stakeholders and the public at large to work towards a future in which indigenous peoples are able to maintain their language and cultures in the face of strong assimilatory pressures, enjoy unrivalled access to their ancestral lands and waters, and pursue their own development agendas as sovereign peoples.

### **Goals**

- Provide opportunities for indigenous peoples and experts to share knowledge, collaborate and fund-raise
- Educate the global community about indigenous cultures, issues and our collective role in creating a more sustainable and equitable future for all peoples
- Advocate for the rights, voices and visions of indigenous peoples
- Celebrate the diversity of the Ethnosphere, the great legacy of cultural worlds

### **What is the meaning of the term - 'Ethnosphere'?**

While the atmosphere comprises all the life-sustaining gasses that envelope the planet and the biosphere comprises all the earth's' living organisms, the Ethnosphere comprises the diversity of peoples, languages

and cultures that give meaning to human existence. *[The Ethnosphere is] a notion perhaps best defined as the sum total of all thoughts, beliefs, myths, and intuitions made manifest today in the myriad cultures of the world. The Ethnosphere is humanity's greatest legacy. It is the product of our dreams, the embodiment of our hopes, the symbol of all that we are and all that we have created as a wildly inquisitive and astonishingly adaptive species.* The health of the Ethnosphere, and therefore the vitality of all humanity, relies on how well we respond to the many immediate threats faced by indigenous peoples.

### General Activities

Project goals will be achieved through the following activities:

1. Produce, disseminate and facilitate use of educational curricula and resources by educators throughout the United States and internationally
2. Develop and support indigenous capacity-building initiatives
3. Produce, archive and disseminate continuously updated news and analysis on the issues and cultural worlds of indigenous peoples
4. Facilitate information sharing and collaborative agreements among indigenous peoples, experts organizations
5. Inspire visitors to appreciate diverse languages, practices, peoples, and challenge them to do what they can to stem the tide of cultural extinction
6. Link indigenous peoples, experts and visitors to advocacy campaigns that influence public policy decisions
7. Provide overview and detailed descriptions concerning the historic context and current issues facing indigenous peoples at global and regional levels using multiple formats and media
8. Offer comprehensive, searchable reference information about indigenous peoples, places and issues that impact on their lives and livelihoods

ETHNOSPHERE COMPONENTS	INDIGENOUS CAPACITY BUILDING	EDUCATION RESOURCES & SERVICES	INDIGENOUS NEWS	PEOPLES & ORGANIZATIONS DATABASE	PUBLICATIONS DATABASE	GLOBAL & REGIONAL VIGNETTES
PRODUCTS & SERVICES	Resources and referrals for indigenous organizations seeking funding and technical assistance.	Introduction to Indigenous Peoples' Curriculum with stand-alone lesson plans for middle, high school and introductory college levels.	Weekly indigenous news with headlines and spotlight stories by region released to news syndicates, e-lists, posted & archived.	Provides data, essays and links regarding peoples, organizations and networks searchable by peoples, places and issues.	All back issues of Cultural Survival Quarterly (2000+ articles) available on-line. A first stop for researching indigenous issues.	Describes, in various formats and media, the state of the wider Ethnosphere along with its major facets and issues.

### Opportunities for Indigenous participation

Indigenous and pro-indigenous organizations are invited to participate actively in Cultural Survival programs:

- Alert Cultural Survival to advocacy campaigns and issues requiring public attention
- Contribute and subscribe to our free on-line Weekly Indigenous news service
- Contribute to our publications or ethnosphere website
- Engage your organization in a publications exchange relationship
- Advise in one of our areas of programming
- Become a member

**Visit our website: [www.cs.org](http://www.cs.org)**