Item No. 4:
Principal theme: "Indigenous peoples and their right to development, including their right to participate in development affecting them"

Madam Chair
I bring the greetings from Alexis First Nation in Alberta, Canada. Abba washte.

I am called Thunderhawk, an Elder of the North American First Nations community in Canada. My people are Nakota Sioux and today our tribe lives west of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Canada was voted the best country in the world to live in, except if you are a native Indian.

First Nations people of Canada continue to be marginalized, unemployed and impoverished due to the insatiable greed and the relentless rape and development of the forests, water, gas, oil and minerals by international corporations. In the past all Indigenous peoples were the victims of colonial expansionism that forced us off our traditional homelands. Today that same land gives wealth and power to the new corporate aristocracy. These international corporations and their employees are no different than the aristocracy and their soldiers of the past. These new age colonialists control our lands and build wealth for their foreign corporate masters giving them unlimited power and arrogance. Today 80% of Alberta's First Nation people are unemployed and the provincial government talks about bringing in over 100,000 jobs from outside the Province.

Shell Canada Ltd. is an integral part of Royal Dutch Shell and principally owned by the Dutch Royal Family and British business interests, has emerged as the king of Kings in the corporate pecking order. In the past this company has had its pipelines stopped in eastern Canada on M'kmac traditional lands due to the exclusion of local Indigenous people from participating in the opportunities that will come from this use of their region, a small victory for our Indigenous communities. The practice of paying off a few continues at the cost of destroying the land from which our people traditionally built healthy communities for our children to grow strong in.

We the First Nations of North America were driven from our traditional lands and the genocide of our Nations was equal to that of the WWII holocaust of the Jewish people. Our children were taken from us and emotionally, physically, and sexually abused by the institutions responsible for their care.
The survivors were treated as property of the government with little to no legal right to pursue our own self-determination. After 250 years of domination and suppression in our own home First Nations have few skills to pursue a meaningful life and the bulk of our people look to general unskilled labouring positions to support themselves and their communities.

The Year 2000 United Nations Working Group of Indigenous Peoples here in Geneva ended with possibly the largest round dance to ever take place. The Dance symbolized strength and unity and I returned to my home with the spirit of that unity determined to do whatever possible to participate in the process of sustainable development for our young people.

We the red race of Canada are only one people on this earth a small part of the human race, I pray to the creator that we will have the strength to survive the corporations and their global economy and take back our communities.

First Nation peoples are beginning to have a more active role in today’s economy through increased education and population growth and it is my intention to assume an even more active role in the economic recovery of my community. To facilitate this process we have been building economic and political relationships throughout all sectors of the economy.

A Canadian First Nations Business Teaming Group, FINBARR recognizes that indigenous employment is a complex matter and today we are working with B.A.N.D. (Broken Arrow Neutral Deminers) and an international defense contractor that is willing to train and promote First Nation people on the foresight crusader project. This highly technical and robotically controlled demining equipment is an opportunity for some First Nations to become skilled technicians and operate sophisticated land mine detection equipment. Clear support from the United Nations in this Indigenous initiative for the elimination of landmines will enhance and support sustainable community development with a strong economic base.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, we beseech you to provide access to information and connections necessary to achieve demining contracts.

Elder Joe Potts Snr
Thunderhawk
Nakota Sioux (Alexis First Nation)

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