


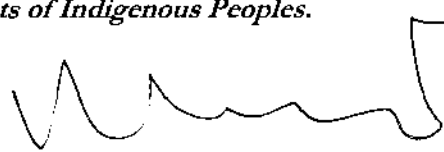
**Joint Oral Intervention of the Innu Council of Nitassinan  
Atikamekw Sipi – Conseil de la Nation Atikamekw  
May 18, 2004**



M. le président et membres de l'Instance permanente,

1. A major component of our right to self-determination is the right to freely dispose of our natural wealth and resources, and not to be deprived of our means of subsistence. We believe that there lies the path in the improvement of Indigenous economic and social conditions.
2. Without a greater share of the lands and resources, Indigenous Peoples will be unable to build their communities and structure the employment opportunities necessary to achieve self-sufficiency. Without a radical and structural change in the economic exchanges between States and Indigenous Peoples, we will be pushed to the edge of economic, cultural and political extinction.
3. For instance, last year's concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of discrimination against Women on Canada indicated that Indigenous women in Canada are still over-concentrated in lower-skill and lower-paying occupations. This specific observation on Canada's report could easily apply to other countries' reports. ***There is a need for States to ensure that income-generating activities for Indigenous women provide for a sustained and adequate income, including all necessary social benefits.***
4. In fact, we are not <sup>Ind</sup> really surprised by CEDAW's concluding observations on Canada with regard to Indigenous Women. All treaty-monitoring bodies, with no exception, came up with similar conclusions and yet Canada has failed to address issues of poverty, discrimination, economic and cultural extinction. Our organizations are deeply concerned that a country that proclaims to be a champion on human rights has failed to live up to its treaty obligations in regard to Indigenous Peoples' human rights.
5. At another level, we welcome the approach and appreciate the efforts of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) which learned that we need to go beyond the conventional project of community development to focus on women, to build on women's strengths, to ensure equitable distribution of resources and benefits, to adopt a holistic approach, to put natural resource and other assets in the hands of women, to entrust women's groups with funds and resources and, to use a right's base approach to development planning. ***We invite the Permanent Forum to highlight in this year's report IFAD's new policies on Indigenous communities projects.***
6. Along with Tebtebba Foundation, the Innu Council of Nitassinan proposed recommendation no. 7 of the Permanent Forum's Report on the second session. We regret to note the absence of any representative from WTO. The impact of trade agreements on our daily lives and on Indigenous Territories deserves at least that someone from WTO explains their strategies and policies, if ~~they~~ any, in regard of Indigenous cultures and Indigenous natural resources. ***We reiterate that there is a need for a follow-up on recommendation no. 7 of the Permanent Forum's report on the second session.***
7. Finally, we recommends to act rapidly on the Declaration of the International Indigenous Women's Forum which ask for the eradication of poverty amongst Indigenous peoples. This Declaration is also supportive of the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

  
ERNEST AWASHISH

  
A. MACKENZIE