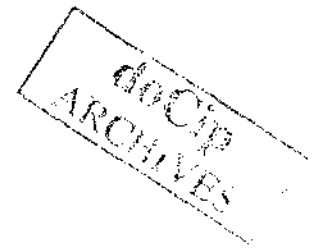


**Indigenous Network on Economies and Trade  
Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs**



**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

**Third Session**

**New York, 10-21, 2004**

**Item 4 (a) of the Provisional Agenda**

**Mandated Area: Economic and Social Development**

Thank you Mr. Chairman:

I am Arthur Manuel and I represent the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and I am also the spokesman of the Indigenous Network on Economies and Trade (INET).

The Indigenous Network on Economies and Trade has made three submissions to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and one submission to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and they were all successfully accepted. These submissions were related to the Canada USA Softwood Lumber Dispute. Our argument was that the Canadian government's "non-recognition of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights was a subsidy to the Canadian forest industry". It is in this context that we make the following recommendations.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues must take a very strong *advocacy* role in preserving and protecting the territorial, economic proprietary rights and knowledge based values of indigenous peoples in the global economic community. It is clear that multinational corporations have been using multilateral and bilateral international economic agreements to make our collective indigenous rights a commodity subject to their ownership and private profit. Privatization like this must stop.
2. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues must develop an indigenous economic statement that would preserve and protect indigenous economies from the narrow economic profit motivated definition, which the multinational corporations are attempting to use as the international standard of determining wealth and co-opt indigenous peoples into.

**Background:**

3. Indigenous women have always taken a leadership role to defend and protect our indigenous values, knowledge and activities. In my area they have been arrested by Canadian authorities for trying to stop the destruction of their land and resources. These community initiatives need international support.

4. The present economic system would have never flourished if it was not because of the sustainable development of indigenous peoples of North America. Historically Europe had exhausted their natural resources and that their capitalist scheme was finished but it was our land and resources that saved their system. The present economic system is based upon abundance but it is also cannibalistic in situations where resources are limited like here on our earth.
5. It is a foolish to think that the corporate consolidation of wealth, money and power is the answer to our poverty. Money management like this is not the answer. We are living in a period based upon scarcity and not abundance. Indigenous woman are the first to be impacted by the destruction of so called natural resource development under multilateral and bilateral economic agreements. Our land users are directly connected to the land and it is they who pay the price first and subsidize the wealth of the multinational corporations.
6. International economics must be adopting the circular vision of development where all things and all creatures are brothers and sisters. We must understand that we cannot just exploit resources to make man made wealth but that we need to see wealth in terms of what we leave for future generations. Women generally speaking need to be included in this process.

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