

**1st Session United Nations Human Rights Council
United Nations, Geneva, Switzerland
19 to 30 June 2006**

**Agenda Item: Reports of mechanisms and mandates (WG on draft Indigenous Declaration)
27 June 2006**

I am Peter Splinter of Amnesty International and am making this statement on behalf of 37 Human Rights NGOs, which complete list is attached to our written submission.

As non-governmental organisations working in the field of human rights, we have seen time and again that the promise of universal respect for and protection of human rights remains unfulfilled for the world's Indigenous peoples. We witness in every region of the world, Indigenous peoples suffering gross violations of their fundamental human rights as the consequence of systemic discrimination, historic injustices and ongoing marginalization.

Mr. President, as the General Assembly resolution highlights, the Council is responsible for promoting universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind, and in a fair and equal manner. It is therefore most fitting that this historic first session of the Council has the opportunity to propose to the General Assembly for adoption one of the most urgently needed and long overdue standards for the recognition and protection of human rights, the draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We join Indigenous representatives in the conviction that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is ready for adoption at this session. The proposed text that emerged from the 11th session of the U.N. Working Group on the draft Declaration (E/CN.4/2006/79) is the culmination of lengthy and exhaustive deliberations among states and Indigenous peoples. Given the broad support for the Working Group proposal among states, as well as Indigenous peoples, there is no justification for any further delay.

For these reasons, we fully support the resolution submitted by the Government of Peru and the co-sponsors, calling for the adoption of the draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We are calling on states not to pursue short term political interests by posing options which would undermine the confidence of Indigenous peoples, and the agreement reached with them, in the course of the more than two decades worth of the negotiations on the draft Declaration. We urge the members of the Council to seize this historic opportunity to ensure, that at long last, the Declaration is put forward for adoption by the General Assembly this year.

By adopting the Declaration, the United Nations will strengthen the whole universal human rights system by setting crucial standards for the survival, dignity and well-being for the world's Indigenous peoples.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Submitted by the following non-governmental organisations with ECOSOC Status:

Amnesty International
Action Canada for Population and Development, Canada
Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme
Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers)
International Commission of Jurists
International Service for Human Rights
Netherlands Centre for Indigenous Peoples, The Netherlands
Rights & Democracy, Canada

Supported by the following non-governmental organisations with ECOSOC Status:

Anti-Slavery International
Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de l'Homme, France
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Canada
Cultural Survival, USA
DoCip, Switzerland
Initiative locale pour le développement intégré, ILDI-ONGD, R.D. Congo
International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, Denmark

Supported by the following non-governmental organisations:

ACSUR Las Segovias, Asociación para la Cooperación con el Sur, España
Adivasi-Koordination, Germany
ALMACIGA Grupo de Trabajo Intercultural, España
ARC International
City Green Solutions, Canada
Coalition for Global Warming Solutions and Environmental Awareness, USA
FERN, Europe
Forum Human Rights, Germany
Global Citizen Center, USA
Global Exchange, USA
Hawaii Institute for Human Rights, Hawai'i
IBIS, Denmark
Insamlingsstiftelsen Ett klick för skogen, Sweden
KAIROS Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, Canada
KWIA, Flemish Support Group for Indigenous Peoples
Ligue des droits et libertés, Quebec
MiningWatch, Canada
Mugarik Gabe, País Vasco
Ontario Public Interest Research Group, Canada
Rainforest Action Network, USA
ROBIN WOOD e.V., Germany
VIDES International (Voluntariat International Femme Education Développement), Italy