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**United Nation Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 7<sup>TH</sup>**

**April 21<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2008**

**Agenda Item 3. Special theme: "Climate change, bio-cultural and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges"**

**By Mary Simat.**

Madam Chairperson,

IPACC is a network of 150 community-based organizations in 20 countries. Most of our members are directly threatened by climate change, but are also holders of expert knowledge about biodiversity and ecological systems in Africa.

IPACC went through strategic planning in Bujumbura last year and has created a strategic action plan on indigenous peoples in Africa and the environment & natural resources.

Key message from indigenous peoples in IPACC is that: Traditional Ecological Knowledge of indigenous peoples is excluded from African state planning on the environment and natural resources, including monitoring and adapting to climate change.

IPACC is working with its members and alliances to help promote expression of Traditional ecological Knowledge of indigenous peoples to secure a position at the negotiation table & policy forums for those who use and rely on natural resources, and whose livelihoods are dependent on sustainable approaches to natural resource management and usage.

IPACC affirms the principles of the CBD and particularly the CBD Addis Ababa Guidelines and Principles on the Sustainable use of Natural resources, which says that those who rely on and manage natural resources locally need to be recognized and empowered by those who hold power. Centralization of natural resource management encourages abuse and unsustainable practices.

ON the issue of Climate Change, IPACC has been involved in the FCCC COP process in Bali, has studied the issue of Avoided Deforestation, including Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, and most recently entered into dialogue with the World Bank about their plans for a Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. Forest based indigenous peoples in Africa insist on their participation, consultation and free prior and informed consent on these mechanisms and initiatives. Further, the World Banks safety mechanisms and operational directives are not currently in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples or the

ILO Convention 169. This issue needs urgent attention.

All indigenous peoples in Africa, hunters and herders in particular, are vulnerable due to non-recognition of their traditional land tenure. REDD and the FCPF pose a serious threat to indigenous peoples in that, like National Parks, it can lead to further land alienation from indigenous peoples for alleged forest conservation. Evidence from Latin America clearly shows that forests managed and protected by indigenous peoples are better carbon sinks than state lands which do not have holistic approaches to biodiversity, conservation and usage. IPACC also emphasizes that the solution to deforestation is the recognition of indigenous tenure, including indigenous mobility and management systems. Those who know the forest best need to be recognized as skilled and important managers.

We remind the UNPFII that there is a war going on in Niger in nomadic indigenous territories. Though the war is concerned with equitable use of natural resources and good governance, we also stress that climate change in the Sahara, Sahel and Kalahari are all stimulating conflict, which is becoming armed conflict in Africa. Failure to include pastoralists and hunter-gatherers in governance and planning poses a risk to peace and development.

IPACC also emphasizes that information technology can help indigenous peoples make transparent to decision makers that we are expert knowledge holders about biodiversity, climate change monitoring and adaptation. IPACC affirms that we are rights holders, both legally and morally.

We ask the UNPFII to ensure that:

1. UNFCCC improves access to its processes for indigenous peoples from Africa
2. UNCCD needs to make a concerted effort to inform African indigenous peoples and integrate them into consultations, research and policy planning;
3. African states need to better understand the CBD obligations, notably the Programme of Work on Protected Areas, Access and Benefit Sharing, and Articles 8J and 10C
4. Donors and UN agencies give more support to indigenous peoples in Africa to promote formal recognition of their traditional ecological knowledge (such as tracking expertise) and the use of participatory

mapping methods;

5. UNEP and UNESCO need to work more closely on protocols for including intangible oral indigenous knowledge systems in UN, African, and state planning of natural resources, the environment, and climate change;
6. IPACC reminds the UNPFII of our 2007 request that national working groups be established in Africa to promote cooperation, dialogue and joint programming between UN agencies, government departments and indigenous peoples. This is to be an evolution of the experience of the UN Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee of Kenya.