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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

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Agenda Item: Review of UN System, Economic and Social Development

Mr. Chairman, there are profound contradictions between the dominant economic vision of globalization and free trade and the vision of traditional Indigenous Peoples. The world's dominant economy measures value in dollars. If it cannot be measured in dollars, it has no value. A child in good health, with appropriate and sufficient food, happy in school, learning its traditions, its language and its culture cannot be measured in dollars. A happy child has no "value" in the world's dominant economy.

Indigenous Peoples find value in a happy child. Children are our future, measured in generations. For the State and the dominant economy, to maintain a child in good health, provide a child an education and let it grow up as it should, is considered a non-productive expense. In the dominant economy a child only has value if it is contributing to the economy as a worker, many times speaking only the dominant language. Future generations are not valued, only that which is produced in dollars and as quickly as possible, without consideration of repercussions on our future generations.

Under the dominant vision of economy and value, a forest in balance with nature also has no value just as it is. It only has value if it is exploited. It has value only when it is converted into lumber for exportation, when it is destroyed. The earth, which provides traditional food for Indigenous families that work it, is considered badly utilized. It only has value in large farms producing for exportation. Applying pesticides and chemical fertilizers to our lands, poisoning the human beings and the communities who work it, only then can it have value. Communities sacrificed to industrialized agriculture and the loss of traditional food, lost on account of the dominant economic vision, is considered a good, advancing development. Indigenous Peoples' and communities' relationship to the land, a relationship of the millennia, cannot be measured in terms of dollars. It has no value according to the dominant economic vision of development.

Mr. Chairman, Article 1 of the Declaration on the Right to Development defines the right to development as "an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and **all peoples** are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized. Part 2 of this Article states that, "[T]he human right to development also implies the full realization of the right of peoples to self determination, which includes subject to relevant provisions of both international Covenants on Human Rights, the exercise of their inalienable right to full sovereignty over all their natural wealth and resources."

Development itself is described by the Preamble to the Declaration on the right to development as, "a global process which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom."

Although the stated aim of the right to development is the constant improvement of well being, in practice, the dominant world economic order does not value well being. In the urgent rush to generate dollars well being has no value. It is an expense - as are human rights.

The States and international actors such as the World Bank and the International Monetary fund, in implementing the process of development, should ***actually improve conditions for the enjoyment of some human rights while not violating any other human rights***. Any process of development that violates any human rights, even if it improves the enjoyment of any other human right, is by its very nature unsustainable and not consistent with the Right to Development.

Mr. Chairman, the International Indian Treaty Council has taken on food security as a concern of great priority. We believe that as Indigenous Peoples have been recognized as most vulnerable to extreme poverty, they are most vulnerable to food insecurity and starvation. We will address food insecurity and the results of the recent global Indigenous Peoples' Consultation on Food Security under a different agenda item with more particularity. But the problem of food insecurity and malnutrition tragically illustrate the contradictions between the States' own identification of the causes of extreme poverty and starvation and the solutions that are proposed for these problems by States and international institutions of economic assistance and cooperation.

Although the right to development is a right of Peoples as well as individuals, only the individual's rights to development are recognized and valued. The States are required to take "resolute steps" against the refusal to recognize the right of Self Determination, by Article 5 of the Declaration on the right to Development. But as solutions to the extreme poverty and food insecurity of the world's Indigenous Peoples, States and international trade organizations practice a process of development that impels the dispossession of Indigenous lands and territories, and destructive development schemes such as industrialized agriculture and mining and mineral extraction. As solutions to hunger, we are denied our means of subsistence.

The World Food Summit in 1996 vowed, in its Plan of Action, Commitment I, Objective 1.1(d) to recognize and support Indigenous "people" in their pursuit of economic and social development with full respect for their identity, traditions, forms of social organization and cultural values. Yet in their solutions for food insecurity, this Summit identified the World Trade Organization and globalized trade as key in achieving food security. The experience of Indigenous Peoples is that the WTO and globalized trade are

primary causes of their starvation and malnutrition and the alarming loss of their means of subsistence.

We therefore respectfully ask the Permanent Forum to make the following recommendations:

1. Recommend to the Commission on Human Rights and its Open-ended Intersessional Working Group, that the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples be adopted as presented by the Sub-Commission, without change or amendment, as critical for the social and economic development, and the survival of Indigenous Peoples;
2. Recommend to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) that it adopt a strong statement that the process of development requires that the collective human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples be observed and respected by all actors in the development process;
3. Recommend to the World Food Summit: five years later, that it adopt a clear statement establishing the preservation and promotion of Indigenous Peoples' traditional means of subsistence as a high priority in all policies, programs and actions taken in furtherance of food security;
4. Recommend to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and all other agencies of international economic cooperation and assistance, that they require that the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples be observed and respected by their clients and in their development programmes; and,
5. Recommend to international development agencies and agencies of international economic assistance and cooperation, particularly the World Bank, that the relocation of Indigenous Peoples in any development scheme be accomplished only with their prior, free and informed consent; and that fundamental to required consultations between Indigenous Peoples, States and transnational corporations on any matters that may affect Indigenous Peoples, their lands, territories or their environment, that just and equitable consultations require, as a pre-condition, that any party, including Indigenous Peoples, have the right to say "no."
6. Recommend to the Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development that he direct his study to the right to development of Indigenous Peoples **as Peoples**, and inform the Commission and the Permanent Forum on its content, particularly the collective nature of the right with regard to Indigenous Peoples and its critical importance to their survival.

for all my relations,

Thank you, Mr. Chairman