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Ms. Peggy Bird

**North America Indigenous Women's Caucus Intervention
Fifth Session of the Permanent Forum**

**Agenda Item 3: Special Theme: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and
Indigenous Peoples: Re-Defining the Goals**

May 16, 2006

Thank you, Madame Chair and all members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, for providing the North America Regional Indigenous Women's Caucus the opportunity to make this intervention to you today. We, the Indigenous Women of North America, who represent Indigenous Nations and organizations from throughout the region, acknowledge the First Peoples of this land and thank them for welcoming us onto their territories. And, we join all of our Indigenous sisters and brothers of the world in solidarity for our common struggles for peace, justice and sovereignty for our respective peoples. We thank our ancestors for the prayers and offerings they have given, of their blood, of their lives, which have assured our survival to share our words with you today, and we ask that these recommendations be accepted and put into immediate action as their impacts will echo forward to assure that our future generations not only survive, but that they flourish.

We know that we are all related and that what impacts one Indigenous person impacts all Indigenous peoples. We currently live in a world that has been drastically impacted by decisions made centuries ago such as the papal bulls issued by Vatican and the doctrine of discovery. We are continuing to reel from the theft of our lands, resources, identities, bodies and spirits. Despite the pain and suffering we also continue to express our prayers to live with one another in peace and in a good way, with respect for all life, especially for the life givers, the Indigenous women.

Recommendations:

1. We urge the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues advocate all UN Agencies and States to acknowledge and recognize the historical co-existence of Indigenous peoples on all social, political and economic levels throughout the Americas and the sovereignty of our distinct Nations.
2. We recommend that the Permanent Forum advocate to the Holy See to immediately rescind the *Inter Caetera* Papal bull of May 4, 1493 and the 1455 bull of *Romanus pontifex* and March 1493 royal charters of England, which have formed the basis of the rape of our Earth Mother and the continuing destruction of our cultures and traditional lifeways.
3. We ask that the Permanent Forum assess the human rights situation of all Indigenous Peoples, including those considered to be living in "developed countries" from all regions in its report, on the re-defining of the Millennium Development Goals, and provide a report to the 6th Session of the Forum.

4. We request that the Permanent Forum recommend to all relevant United Nations Agencies that provisions be made to ensure the inclusion of all voices of Indigenous women throughout the Americas in international forums relevant to our human rights, particularly in light of the traditional role of Indigenous women as leaders, decision makers, care takers and life givers. In this regard, we strongly request that a travel fund for the participation of Indigenous women from North America needs to be created for this purpose and Nation States and the United Nations agencies must be encouraged to meaningfully contribute to this Fund to make it a viable and continuing resource, to assure the full and effective participation of Indigenous women of North America.

5. We request the Permanent Forum to encourage States to establish multinational standards that respect, protect and fulfill Indigenous Peoples' collective human rights in light of the impact of Canadian and United States based corporations in Central, South and North America and in the Caribbean that negatively impact, displace and usurp Indigenous Peoples, our Nations and lifeways.

6. We urge that the Permanent Forum call upon States to ensure the full and effective integration of Indigenous Peoples perspectives, including those of Indigenous women, in all international trade policies and development, such as NAFTA. Any development must be based on full consultation and free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples.

7. We recommend that the Permanent Forum review, monitor and report back on the violations of the right to health of Indigenous women and girls, particularly regarding the continued sterilization of Indigenous women without their full, free, prior and informed consent including those who are being used as medical test cases for contraceptive studies. In this regard, we urgently ask that the Forum assert and support Indigenous women's right to self-determination over our own reproductive rights, including to advocate for full access to all sexual health education and health care services.

8. We strongly recommend that the Permanent Forum support the creation of a Commission of Indigenous leaders to serve as observers to situations of human rights violations, particularly regarding human rights abuses of Indigenous women and girls by Canada and the United States.

9. We firmly request that the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen visit the Six Nations of the Grand River, under his authority as Special Rapporteur, and report his findings to the 6th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. We urgently recommend that the Permanent Forum assure that Indigenous Peoples must be at the table and fully recognized as sovereign Nations. In this regard, we ask that the Permanent Forum member whose portfolio contains human rights join in this effort.

10. We request that the Permanent Forum advocate to the appropriate UN agencies, including UNIFEM and UNICEF, and States to apply the CEDAW principles and take immediate action to review, monitor and provide a comprehensive report on violence against all Indigenous women and girls in North America, particularly sexual violence, and violence in the context of armed conflict. Indigenous women must be full participants in this process.

11. We recommend that the Permanent Forum advocate that the Convention Against All Forms of Genocide be applied to ensure that its principles are applied throughout North America as well as throughout the world.

12. We recommend that the Permanent Forum advocate for the full recognition and enforcement of all treaties entered into between States and Indigenous peoples.

We must be mindful of our thoughts and prayers. We must be mindful of our actions and behaviors to be aware that we live with what we create. We ask the members of the Permanent Forum to join us in creating a world where we can live together in peace, harmony and balance; a world where Indigenous women are respected and honored, a world where our human rights are not violated, a world where we are no longer being violated.

Thank you.