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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CAUCUS OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN

Kalinago Carib Nation (Dominica); Consejo General de Tainos Borincanos (Puerto Rico); Fundacion Social Luz Cosmica Fraternalista Taina (Dominican Republic); Eagle Clan Arawaks (Barbados and Guyana); United Confederation of Taino People (Regional)

*Seventh Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
24 April 2008, Item 7 Half-day discussion on indigenous languages*

Takahi (Greetings) Honorable Chair, Distinguished Delegates and Representatives of the World's Indigenous Peoples, we welcome this opportunity to address Agenda Item 8 (c) the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

The INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CAUCUS OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN welcomes the Permanent Forum's report of the international expert group meeting on indigenous languages. We support its recommendations to States, United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, and indigenous peoples.

We are especially supportive of the recommendation that "UNESCO strengthen its working relationship with NGOs and civil society organizations so that language policies are implemented directly at the level of indigenous communities and seek government support where possible."

With this in mind we recommend that the Permanent Forum urge UNESCO to continue this work with regional Caribbean indigenous organizations such as the United Confederation of Taino People (UCTP) and the Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples (COIP) to facilitate follow-up.

Honorable Chair, our Caucus would also like to support the recommendations submitted by the United Confederation of Taino People to the international expert group meeting on indigenous languages.

With this in mind, we recommend that the Permanent Forum urge the full and effective participation of Caribbean Indigenous Peoples in the design and organization of a world conference on linguistic diversity, indigenous languages, identity and education and that this initiative be facilitated in partnership with regional Caribbean indigenous organizations such as the UCTP and COIP.

Our Caucus also recommends that the Permanent Forum bring to the attention of the Expert Group and UNESCO the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which mention Indigenous Peoples specifically.

In relation to the WSIS, and "promoting empowerment of indigenous languages", we also call attention to indigenous led initiatives such as the **International Indigenous ICT Task Force (IITF)** and its premier project the "**International Indigenous Portal**" (www.indigenouportal.com).

Our Caucus fully supports this indigenous ICT initiative and we recommend that the Permanent Forum urge the Expert Group and UNESCO to invite the IITF to be a part of its future projects and related follow-up.

The Permanent Forum has been a staunch supporter of Indigenous Peoples engaging the Information Society and we urge this body to continue its work supporting the WSIS Declaration and Programme of Action.

In closing we say Bo'matum (thank you) for this opportunity