

**Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Fifth session
10 -14 July 2011, United Nations, Geneva**

Agenda Item 3: The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Intervention by the International Indian Treaty Council, presented by Andrea Carmen

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

As this is the first time the International Indian Treaty Council has taken the floor at this session, we begin by expressing our warm congratulations and full support to Chief Wilton Littlechild and Ms. Jannie Lasimbang for their election as Chair and Vice Chair of this session. We look forward to working with them and with all participants very constructively during the coming week.

Regarding our discussion of this very important agenda item, there are two equally important elements which will be instrumental in determining the success of the outcomes of the World Conference from the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples. These are 1) the process and modalities of its development, planning and implementation which must include by necessity, the full formal and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples; and 2) the content and agenda of the Conference itself, with a focus on commitments for action to ensure that the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including those affirmed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, are upheld, protected and implemented on all levels.

The World Conference and the planning process that is already underway is a watershed process in the long trajectory of work by Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations which will determine the true depth of political will by States and the UN system to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the minimum standard they have agreed to uphold.

The International Indian Treaty Council expresses our great appreciation to the members of the 4th session of the EMRIP for their very important proposal number five (5) in last year's report to the United Nations Human Rights Council's 18th session which:

(a) Refers to the need for an inclusive and principled approach to ensure the full participation of indigenous peoples in the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples at all stages, – from planning and preparations through to the conference itself and any follow-up. Furthermore, the principle of full, formal, equal and effective participation by indigenous peoples should be applied to all future world conferences on the basis of the rights affirmed in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

This proposal, together with the strong recommendations by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 10th and 11th Sessions, was instrumental in the level of engagement Indigenous Peoples have achieved in this process to date. Notably, the historic step by the President of General Assembly to appoint John Henriksen, Sami Parliament representative, as the Indigenous co-facilitator proposed by Indigenous Peoples to work jointly with Ambassador Luis de Alba of Mexico, is a very significant and groundbreaking advance in this regard.

We reiterate our previous recommendations to the EMRIP and the Permanent Forum that, an Indigenous co-President should be selected to serve at the Conference, and that the Conference should take place over three days rather than two due to the scope and importance of the issues to be addressed.

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Regarding content, we would like to reiterate the call expressed previously by Indigenous Peoples to include and incorporate key Declarations and Reports by Indigenous Peoples as themes to be included in the agenda and programme of work for the World Conference. In this regard, we specifically highlight and express our support for two specific proposals:

1) The Rio + 20 Indigenous Peoples' International Declaration on Sustainable Development and Self-Determination was adopted on June 19th 2012 by consensus of over seventy Indigenous Nations, Organizations, and Federations from all regions as well as Indigenous experts from the UN Permanent Forum, EMRIP and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It included the commitment of Indigenous Peoples to "define and implement our own priorities for economic, social and cultural development and environmental protection, based on our traditional cultures, knowledge and practices, and the implementation of our inherent right to Self-determination". It makes the specific proposal "that Indigenous Peoples vision and practice of Sustainable Development be a focus of discussion at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples."

2) A 2nd recommendation which will be presented to the 3rd UN Seminar on Treaties Agreement and Other Constructive Arrangements, reiterating similar proposals made to the brainstorming session on the World Conference in Copenhagen in January 2012 and the 11th session of the Permanent Forum is *"That the recommendations of the 3rd Seminar, including a process to establish a competent international body to address violations and disputes pertaining to Treaties, Agreements and Other Constructive Arrangements, be presented to the UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014 for assessment and further discussion regarding implementation."*

We thank you for your kind attention to our proposals and request that these recommendations be reflected in the EMRIP's report from this session. Thank you, Cheoque Utesia.