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Item 4A

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United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Eighth Session, New York
18 – 29 May, 2009

Joint Statement Submitted by the International Indian Treaty Council on behalf of the
Indigenous Peoples Caucus for the Stockholm Convention COP 4 High Level Segment in
Geneva

Agenda Item 4 (a): Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous
Peoples

Thank you Madame Chair,

On May 7th 2009, a statement was presented by the Indigenous Peoples Caucus at the Stockholm
Convention COP 4 High Level Segment which took place in Geneva May 4th – 8th 2009, with
participants representing Arctic, North, Latin American, Caribbean and Pacific Indigenous
Peoples.

Following are excerpts of the caucus statement and a specific request to the UNPFII's 8th
session:

"Indigenous Peoples continue to bear the brunt of the continued use of the POPs chemicals. Throughout this session, Indigenous Peoples have stressed that the total elimination of the nine new chemicals will have a direct positive impact on safeguarding our health and way of life. This must remain the central goal of this COP session. Arctic Indigenous Peoples suffer levels of POPs contamination in blood and breast milk that are among the highest of any population on earth, even though these chemicals have never been produced in the Arctic. This recognition inspired the negotiation of the Stockholm Convention, as noted in the preamble, and must now motivate the Convention's strong implementation.

Indigenous Peoples participating in COP 4 underscore the importance of recognizing and applying international human rights standards in these discussions, including those upholding and protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in Sept. 2007 requires all forums and bodies of the UN to integrate, promote and respect these standards.

Article 42 of the Declaration ... applies to the Stockholm Convention COP4 as a process of the United Nations. It also underlines the commitment of the various State Parties who are participating.

We affirm that the formal participation and unique contributions of Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic as well as other regions is vital to maintaining the original spirit and intent of the Stockholm Convention and ensuring the success of its effectiveness evaluation process currently under development. For this reason, we have proposed that the COP 4 implement a process for the development of formal mechanisms for the participation of Indigenous Peoples."

Madame Chair, the Indigenous caucus made the following specific proposal to the COP4, which will require additional follow up at future sessions of the Stockholm Convention to ensure implementation. We request support from the UNPFII 8th session to be included in its

recommendations to the UN System regarding implementation of article 42 of the Declaration for the following proposal:

"We are specifically proposing that the COP 4 take action to implement at this session to create an Indigenous Peoples Working Group on Effective Implementation, consisting of Indigenous Peoples from all regions. This Working Group will assist the Secretariat and the Parties to the Convention to collect, compile and provide expertise and information from scientific studies conducted by and/or in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and organizations as well as information provided by traditional use practitioners and knowledge holders to monitor impacts and levels of POPs in the Arctic and other regions, and support the effective implementation of the Convention. It can also develop and propose effective indicators relating to impacts on Indigenous Peoples' traditional subsistence foods, cultural practices, environment, human rights, health and well-being; identify best practices and partnership models for implementation and monitoring on national and regional levels; and provide technical briefings on a regular basis and as requested by the Secretariat and the Parties to the Convention.

In addition we reiterate our call for the inclusion of an Indigenous expert in the POPRC, appointed in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, and call for opportunities for the effective input by Indigenous Peoples into the process and programs of the Voluntary Trust Fund for the Stockholm Convention to ensure greater awareness and participation in this process by Indigenous Peoples from all regions.

As Indigenous Peoples, we call for greater inclusion, we offer our good will and expertise to the Parties and to the Secretariat for the Stockholm Convention, and we affirm that Indigenous Peoples are part of the solution.

Thank you."

Stockholm Convention COP 4 Indigenous Peoples' Caucus members:

Island Sustainability Alliance C.I. Inc (Pacific Island Peoples)

International Indian Treaty Council

Akiak Native Community, Alaska

Alaska Intertribal Council

Native Village of Savoonga, Alaska

Alaska Community Action on Toxics

Resist Environmental Destruction on Indigenous Lands (REDOIL, Alaska)

Native Women's Association of Canada

Alaska Region, National Congress of American Indians