

World Indigenous Nations (WIN) Sports Inc.

International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development

An NGO in consultative status to the United Nations
Economic and Social Council

Indigenous World Association

Joint Statement of the World Indigenous Nations (WIN) Sports Inc., the International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development, the Native Women's Association of Canada, and Indigenous World Association, 3rd Session, Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights Council, United Nations, Geneva, July 12th to 16th, 2010

Item 3. Study on Indigenous Peoples and the Right to Participate in Decision-making

Presenter: Chief Wilton Littlechild, IPC

Thank you for allowing me to make a further intervention ^{on behalf of several NGOs} on a matter that has just arisen and is central to the right to participate in decision-making processes. As Ambassador for the World Indigenous Nations (WIN) Games and the recently concluded 2010 Olympic Winter Games, I must address the unacceptable denial of Indigenous athletes' participation in the World Lacrosse Championships being held this week in England. As many delegations know, we have advocated for many years for the full participation of Indigenous athletes and teams at international competitions.

The Iroquois National Lacrosse Team is a talented group of Native North American athletes representing the six Nations that make up the Iroquois

Confederacy. The Team is listed as a full member nation by the Federation of International Lacrosse which is holding the World Championships beginning on Thursday. In past world championships, the Iroquois Nationals have won medals and remain serious contenders for the title. In fact, they are entering this year's championship ranked fourth in the world.

Lacrosse is French for "Bagattaway", the Cree word for the game or for "Tewaarathon" in the Iroquois language, a game created by Indigenous peoples and now played in over 60 States around the world. This game holds spiritual significance for Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island.

Traditionally, it was played to demonstrate our gratitude to the Creator, to entertain the Creator; for living a full life, one where we live in harmony with nature and at peace with ourselves.

The right to participate in sports at the world championship level is all being jeopardized by the United States' refusal to issue proper travel clearance for the team members who carry Iroquois passports. This violates articles of the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, in particular article 31 (~~otherwise known as~~ ^{traditional cultural expressions and manifestations including} the right to sports and traditional games); article 9 (the right to belong to an Indigenous Nation in accordance with their customs and traditions), and article 33 (the right of Indigenous peoples to determine their own identity and membership in accordance with their customs and traditions). ^{and article 30 the right to maintain and develop activities for spiritual, cultural and social purposes ... with other peoples across borders. Indeed, this is exercising the right to self-determination through sports and traditional games.} It is a sad irony that Indigenous peoples cannot participate at the elite sports level in a traditional game in an international competition where "one of the requirements to play is that you need to be representing who you are in the

competition.” (Ms. Waterman, a member of the Team’s Board) The Iroquois Nationals have traveled on passports issued by their own Nations to many championships, accepted by many States, including Australia, Japan and the United Kingdom in the past.

We recommend to the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that they examine this aspect of the right to participate in this year’s report. It is further recommended that the Expert Mechanism issue a formal objection to this denial of recognition of the human rights of Indigenous peoples. Lastly, we recommend that Her Excellency, Navanethem Pillay, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, investigate this matter on an urgent basis.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. L. Atchard" followed by a flourish.

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