

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

August 5, 1986

Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Working Group on
Indigenous Populations
Sixth session
Item 7

WGIP 88/UN1/4

OTHER MATTERS

Statement of the International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development

Madam Chairman:

We would like to comment on a few procedural matters, endorse certain suggestions that have been put forward from the Chair, and ask for some advice on the means of intervention in the standard-setting process.

We represent an Indigenous Resource Center that provides support to indigenous peoples who are concerned with the development of natural resources. As such we are particularly interested in the draft standards which have been tabled by you, Madam Chairman; and would like to review the items which relate to resource development, economic development, and environmental protection.

We appreciate the suggestion you made that you would like to receive the comments of governments, NGOs, affiliated agencies, and intergovernmental organizations; and return next year with a revised draft. We would want to contribute to this process, and ask your advice on the procedure we should use for communicating with the Working Group during the year.

Many of our members control sub-surface resources, so we will of course suggest that sub-surface resources be included, necessarily, in the draft standards. We will want to emphasize the need for complimentary resource development and environmental protection.

We agree that indigenous rights require collective protection that is not available through existing instruments, such as Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We are indigenous peoples. We concur therefore, with the suggestion that the name of the working group be changed to reflect the fact that this is a working group on indigenous peoples.

Finally, many of our natural resource rights are confirmed by treaties between our peoples and States. We consider these treaties to be of vital importance, and would like to contribute to the process of examining treaty issues, both for the purposes of assisting in the draft of standards that will support treaties and treaty development, and for the proposed treaty study. Once again we ask the Chair to advise us on the correct procedure to accomplish this task.

Thank you.