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**SPEAKING NOTES FOR
FIRST SESSION OF U.N. PERMANENT FORUM
NEW YORK - MAY 13, 2002**

Negan, kakeyow kitatamiskatinowow. Mina kinanaskomtinowow. Allow me, please, to first bring you greetings from the Maskwacys Cree, my family and also to thank all of you.

Ninanaskomaw keitaya kakeesimostamakuyak, ninanaskomawak Maskwacysak, ninanaskomawak kakeyow kakesetoskowchik. Thank you to our Elder for his invocation and prayers. Thank you to my family, relatives and friends. To those who nominated and supported me, thank you for your trust and this great honour.

This is truly a historic day for all Indigenous Peoples. Thanks to those of you who worked so hard to make this day a reality. Also to all those warriors who moved on to the spirit world before they could see their dreams come true. I know they celebrate with us this moment. Yet, it is only another step of our long journey together, seeking recognition as Peoples, Tribes and Nations.

Sometime ago I asked our Elders how we would say "United Nations" in our language. One sister responded, "Mamao Atooskeyw Kamik" - "Where Peoples work together". I thought how very close that is to our International Decade Theme. It is my belief that the First Session will see us begin to live it truly - to build "Partnerships in Action" - working together. Seeing our Treaties honoured and respected.

We must ensure, however, to focus our efforts on positive action. With this U.N. Forum we will rebuild our Indigenous Nations, re-capture our families and spiritual strength. We will do that by building on our successes, lifting each other up and coordinating our work effectively and efficiently with our partners.

Today we begin to take our rightful place in the Family of Nations. In three years and beyond, Indigenous Peoples will be recognized for their valuable contributions to humankind. As a U.N. Family Member, we will be involved at every possible International area as full and effective participants with self-determination and Treaty Rights.

Ambitious? Yes. Possible? Yes, because it's up to all of us. This is where Peoples/Nations work together. "Weetchitowin". As I thank the United Nations' Members and Staff for this challenge and opportunity, I remind us and restate: "When Indigenous Peoples win, the U.N. Family and the world wins." With respect and shared responsibilities, we can and will together build a better and hopeful future for our children and their children.

My prayer is for honesty, kindness, sharing and strength, our Cree Nation principles. Finally, Hai Hai - Ninanaskomon: Ninanaskomaw Kismanarito. I thank our Great Spirit, the Creator, for this wonderful blessing.

Mr. Wilton Littlechild, L.P.C.