

INTERNATIONAL TREATY 4 SECRETARIAT - NGO

16th Session – United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations
27 – 31 July 1998

Agenda Item 8 : Consideration of the Final Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements between States and indigenous populations.

Madam Chair, members of the Working Group, fellow indigenous brothers and sisters. We express our gratitude for an opportunity to speak on this very important agenda item, and we thank you for the opportunity to convey our positions as it relates to the subject matter at hand.

At this time I would like to congratulate the Special Rapporteur on the completion of the final report of the Treaty study. The difficulties encountered by the Special Rapporteur during his work, has certainly drawn praise and confidence in the due diligence exercised and the close maintenance to focus.

On behalf of our Indigenous Peoples of the Treaty 4 Territory and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations of North America, thank you for providing this monumental document. The benefits our future generations will receive is certainly supported and attested to from the conclusions and recommendations contained therein.

I bring the message of 72 First Nations Chiefs and Councils who accept and endorse the Special Rapporteurs Final Report on the Treaty Study. We look forward to providing direction for the implementation of the recommendations and we especially look forward to the benefits arising from the report.

Madam Chair, the four UN sponsored workshops recommended to occur to further elaborate and plan dispute mechanisms , modalities for redress, implementation/observance of Indigenous Treaty Rights, and . Is a recommendation we also make, and we urge the various United Nations bodies to begin the planning process and consult with indigenous organizations to ensure these workshops become a reality. We support our fellow North American brothers and sisters from the International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development to host one of these conferences.

WGIP 98/NAM. CAN/16

The recommendations found within the report indicate major developments to occur, we agree that jurisdictional issues should be handled by an independent body, outside of existing non-indigenous governmental structures. Only through a forum of that nature would our issues receive respect, and solutions that would benefit our people.

Once again Madam Chair, we fully support and endorse the work of the Special Rapporteurs Treaty Study Final Report, and we urge that the UN system fully support and commence the process of planning the four workshops identified, and to ultimately assist in the implementation of the full reports conclusions and recommendations.

We have patiently waited for the results of this process, it is now time to seize the moment and begin the business our forefathers laid out for us many generations ago.

Meegwetch.