

**UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues
Forth Session, May 16 - 27 May, 2005**

**Agenda Item 3: Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples:
(a) Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals: "Eradicate extreme
poverty and hunger"; good practices and barriers to implementation;**

**Oral Statement by the International Indian Treaty Council, the International
Organization of Indigenous Resource Development, the Confederacy of Treaty 6
First Nations Canada, Indigenous Environmental Network and the Frente por la
Democracia y el Desarrollo- Coalición Campesina Indígena del Istmo, Oaxaca
Mexico**

Thank you Madame Chair.

Indigenous Peoples have articulated clear positions regarding the scope as well as impediments to the Right to Food and Food Security through statements and declarations at a number of international gatherings. In April 2002, a consensus of 125 Indigenous delegates (farmers, hunters, pastoralists, fishers, gatherers and others) from 28 countries produced the "Declaration of Atitlán" at the first Indigenous Peoples' Global Consultation on the Right to Food and Food Security, organized by the IITC in conjunction with the UN Food and Agriculture organization (FAO). Its recommendations and are directed towards states, industry and multilateral institutions including the United Nations, as well as towards Indigenous Peoples and were formally presented at the World Food Summit +5, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and a number of other International bodies including this Forum.

The Declaration's preamble underscores the far-reaching scope of the Right to Food. It states that "the denial of the Right to Food for Indigenous Peoples not only denies us our physical survival, but also denies us our social organization, our cultures, traditions, languages, spirituality, sovereignty, and total identity; it is a denial of our collective indigenous existence".

The Declaration also stresses that "Food Sovereignty is the right of Peoples to define their own policies and strategies for the sustainable production, distribution, and consumption of food, with respect for their own cultures and their own systems of managing natural resources and rural areas, and is considered to be a precondition for Food Security."

We greatly appreciate the comments of the High Commissioner on Human Rights Mrs. Louise Arbour to this body yesterday, in particular as she also noted the fundamental importance, as does the Declaration of Atitlan, of Article 1 in Common of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which affirms that "in no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence".

The Declaration of Atitlán reflected the consensus view of the participants regarding the obstacles to FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY for Indigenous Peoples Globally, including:

1. “The implementation and domination of globalization and free trade...”;
2. “The imposition of industrial models by the governments, particularly in the form of industrialized mono-agriculture...and “the adoption of alien market systems [which] imposes foods...that do not nourish, but instead cause diseases and problems of all sorts...”;
3. “The extension of intellectual property rights in favor of multinational corporations that has increased bio-piracy and the illicit appropriation of our biological diversity and traditional knowledge; and the introduction of genetically altered food...”;
4. “The growing imposition of the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers that poison Mother Earth, the communities that work The Earth, and the food resources on which Indigenous Peoples depend worldwide...”;
5. “The imposition of unsustainable projects by governments and private companies in our territories without consultation or prior informed consent, and without taking into account the rights and values of the Indigenous Peoples affected;”
6. “The policies and demands of international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and their structural adjustment programs;”
7. “Military and repression in Indigenous territories, in particular Plan Colombia and the fumigation of indigenous crops...”;
8. “National policies that impose inadequate and exclusionary models and practices, which in turn result in the loss of our lands, territories and collective indigenous identity...”;

We urge the members of the Permanent Forum to again the Declaration of Atitlán, in the content of the current theme of this session regarding the barriers to the full enjoyment of the fundamental Right to Food Security for Indigenous Peoples.

We also invite and urge the Permanent Forum members to participate actively future discussions, assessments and collaborative efforts within the UN System and, in particular with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, to move forward in identifying specific priorities, criteria and methodologies that can be used as “indicators” to inform future technical, program and policy initiatives within FAO, SARD and other bodies.

Towards this end, IITC and FAO have agreed to collaborate on a **2nd Global Consultation for Indigenous Peoples on the Right to Food and Food Security**, proposed to take place in Oaxaca Mexico in November of this year, in order to insure participation and input of Indigenous Peoples from all regions in the next phase of further developing this groundbreaking area of work.

This Consultation will serve as an opportunity to assess and evaluate the recommendations contained in the Declaration of Atitlán, and to determinate the necessary next steps based on this evaluation.

A key objective will be the development of “cultural indicators” for the Right to Food to address a critical void in the current set of factors that determine sustainable development and food security. The current economic, social and environmental “pillars” of sustainable development and food security do not fully account for the crucial role and relationship of culture for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. We are very appreciative that this void is recognized by FAO and its Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) initiative for which the IITC continues to serve as the Indigenous Focal Point.

We also express our appreciation for the interest expressed by the UN Rapporteur on the Right to Food Mr. Jean Zeigler in Indigenous Peoples’ concerns for the protection of their traditional food systems and subsistence practices, based on the protection and exercise of their traditional cultures, Treaties, land, water and other natural resource rights, and recognizing the devastating impacts of non-sustainable development, mineral extraction and environmental contamination.

We urge the Permanent Forum to also take into account these interrelated vital factors in its report and recommendations addressing eradication of poverty and hunger in the context of the Right to Food for Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you, for all our relations.