

Stakeholder Preparatory Forum for the Post-2015 Development Agenda Negotiations
16 January, 2015
Conference Room 3, United Nations Headquarters, New York
“Welcome and a Way Forward”
Opening panel presentation by Andrea Carmen, International Indian Treaty Council

Lios em chaniabo uma wayaim. Respectful Greetings my relatives. I share with the other members of this opening panel the great honor of welcoming you to this gathering.

Why are we here today and what do we hope to accomplish? It's true that we need to come to agreements on indicators and targets for reducing poverty, inequality, greenhouse gasses and loss of biodiversity among other critical topics. And we must discuss how to ensure that human rights are upheld in all aspects of implementation and monitoring. But the most important thing we are here to achieve is voiced by our hearts in the love we feel for our children and grandchildren, the children in all of our communities and our shared understanding of the future they will face if the post-2015 Development Agenda does not achieve transformative change.

Indigenous Peoples are taught to look 7 generations in the future so that the impacts of our decisions and actions will ensure their survival and well-being, just as our ancestors did for us. But our prophecies and traditional knowledge tell us that, as a result of careless and greedy human activities, we must now take action with a profound sense of urgency and within a much shorter time frame.

The 1990 UN Global Consultation on the Right to Development stated that, "the most destructive and prevalent abuses of Indigenous Rights are the direct consequences of development strategies that fail to respect their fundamental right of self-determination." Today, 25 years later, the survival of Indigenous Peoples, who the UN has determined care for 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity on their traditional lands, continues to be threatened all over the world by mining, oil drilling, damming, deforestation, toxic contamination and the pervasive impacts of climate change.

Given this reality, while we are very appreciative of the work of the co-chairs and the support of some States, we were disappointed that the outcome document adopted by the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals mentioned "Indigenous Peoples" only twice. Our recommendation is that Indigenous Peoples must be fully engaged in the next steps of the process, most specifically in the development of indicators, National Action Plans and implementation monitoring processes. In this way we can ensure that our core priorities which include self-determination, Free Prior and Informed Consent, cultural rights, Rights to lands and resources, Treaty rights, safeguards for traditional livelihoods, and full and effective participation will be effectively addressed and incorporated.

We have achieved many advances at the UN, most notably the September 13th, 2007 adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the General Assembly as the minimum standard required for the dignity, survival and well-being of the world's Indigenous Peoples.

The inherent rights it affirms provide the framework for moving forward based on our recognized right to participate in decision making that would affect our rights. Another key step forward was the consensus adoption by the UN General Assembly of the outcome document from the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples on September 22nd 2014. It specifically recognizes the importance of Indigenous Peoples' participation in the promotion of sustainable development, and affirms our right to free prior and informed consent regarding development impacting our lands and territories. States made a commitment specifically regarding this process in paragraph 37 as follows: *"We note that indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In this regard, we commit ourselves to giving due consideration to all the rights of indigenous peoples in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda"*.

We look forward to seeing how these commitments by States will be carried forward in the next stages of this process on the national and international levels.

Indigenous Peoples are an essential part of the solution, not as a "sector of civil society" but as distinct self-governing and self-determining Peoples and Nations with tested traditional knowledge about living in harmony with the Natural world in all its abundance. We are here today to find a way forward together based on a collective commitment to strong action, full and equal participation and true partnership founded on respect, equal standing and mutual recognition.

Cheoque utesia, thank you very much.