

**PREPERATORY MEETING OF THE 13TH SESSION FOR THE
COMMISSION ON SUSTANABLE DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT FOR
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES;**

By Lucy Mullenkei and Pricillah Settee.- Indigenous Peoples Caucus.

Indigenous Peoples are concerned that ecosystems, including water systems, have been destroyed and polluted and are in crisis. For many Indigenous Peoples worldwide, safe and adequate water supply and waste disposal facilities are lacking. There is a lack of community infrastructure programs to address the most immediate health threats, basic sanitation facilities and safe housing,.

Commercialization and privatization of land and water contradicts Indigenous perspectives that water is inseparable from land and peoples. Oceans and fresh water system are critical areas of Indigenous Peoples that continue to be polluted with chemicals, pesticides, sewage, disease, radioactive contamination, and waste dumping.

Sustaining sanitation, as related to water policies and management systems, is a critical issue to Indigenous Peoples - from every region of the world - both in developing and developed countries. It is unfortunate that in some countries, the efforts of Indigenous Peoples to achieve self-determination, the rights to their lands, territories and natural resources; and the securing of their customary water rights has created serious disputes between States and Indigenous Peoples. This situation could be one factor contributing to the lack of prioritizing the sustainable sanitation needs and providing for the implementation of services in Indigenous Communities.

Mr Chairman, Human Settlement, water and sanitation cover a complex of social and ecological interrelationships, between peoples and Mother Earth. Human settlements are cultural homes that nurture the traditional knowledge and wisdom within our larger ecological home, Mother Earth. Water is a sacred element of this planet and it sustains all life. Sanitation standard determines the well-being, health and life of biodiversity and peoples.

Where peoples are not separate from their lands, territories and natural resources, including water. These provide for peoples' social, economic, religious, political needs and environments. This is a far cry from the urban concept of settlements as simply infrastructures and facilities.

For Indigenous hunters, gatherers, nomads, farmers, herders, fishers and pastoralists, a continuing relationship and access to their natural homelands provide for their livelihood and food security. They follow patterns of human settlement, which are appropriate for their natural environments.

Related to human settlement, water is a critical source of life. In many Indigenous societies, their relationship to the life-giving qualities of water permeates their culture and spiritual values. Indigenous Peoples' systems of water management and use are based

upon principles and practices that balance immediate needs with the needs of the environment and other living things, plants and animals, as well as other people, and the sustainability for future generations.

Recommendation.

- Sufficient attention must be paid at this meeting to reviewing the overall concepts of governance, practice of sustainable livelihood, integrated land-use planning and resource management to ensure that the long-term diversity and health of ecosystems continue to nurture human settlements, including the well-being of Indigenous Peoples.
- Due respect must be given to the Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination and sovereignty over essential life-sustaining elements. Government policies are restricting access to their lands and territories, violating their right to sustainable livelihoods, water sources and appropriate housing. These policies directly undermine the goal of human security, poverty eradication and social support systems for all, leading to the deep impoverishment of Indigenous communities.
- Within the action plan on human settlements, the implementation of integrated land-use planning and natural resource base management strategies continues to be weak, with slow progress being made in the mapping and demarcation of Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories towards security of tenure and legal protection. Indigenous Peoples urge the Commission on Sustainable Development to give high priority to this activity.
- Local, National, Regional and International goals must be developed for realistic targets for improved sanitation and hygiene services, adopting community-based, low-cost and intermediate technological approaches, bearing in mind the human right to clean, safe water and sanitation services.
- Developing and developed countries must develop clear policies, targets and institutional frameworks to improve sanitation, assure safe and adequate water supply, as well as access to hygiene services for the Indigenous Peoples who live within their boundaries.
- All governments must commit to public sector delivery of water and sanitation services. Indigenous Peoples have serious concerns with a market-based approach to water, sanitation services and management. There must be assurance that adequate financial resources are made available and that there is the provision for local capacity-building. In areas with Indigenous communities, mechanisms for the option for Indigenous Peoples to control and manage their own water and sanitation systems must be provided.