

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' CAUCUS¹ STATEMENT FOR THE MAJOR GROUP DIALOGUE SESSION, TUESDAY, 06 MAY 2008

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Chair and Delegates,

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms our rights as peoples with the exercise self-determination. Governments must therefore seek partnerships with Indigenous Peoples which acknowledge Indigenous Peoples' ownership, control and management of their lands, territories and resources. Relevant rights regarding development are to be found in 23 of the 46 Articles of the UN Declaration.

Land is at the core for the survival and well-being of indigenous peoples. Access to and protection of traditional lands and waters, and the continuation of traditional livelihoods, are essential for the over-all security and well-being of Indigenous Peoples.

Policies of economic globalization and agricultural modernization bring widespread introduction of commercial crops based on intensive use of modern agrochemical inputs and large quantities of water use. Genetically modified organisms and terminator seeds undermines indigenous peoples' food sovereignty.

Governments and corporations are now increasingly investing in alternative energy sources, including agrofuels. Today, indigenous territories are targeted for agrofuel production turning precious land from food crops and driving up food costs.

Modernization has also led to forced removal of indigenous and tribal communities, including the abolition of traditional forms of livelihoods.

All peoples have a right to be secure in their means of subsistence. Traditional livelihood systems, such as pastoralism, rotational agriculture, hunting and gathering and agroforestry, are discriminated against by modern agriculture and rural development, undermining continued viability of these systems and deepening indigenous peoples marginalization and poverty.

For example, there are 3 million pastoralists in Africa, practising a dynamic form of land use and resource management system, incorporating production, trade and culture. National development planning excludes pastoral peoples' priorities, leading to a lack of viable markets, devaluation of livestock (which serve as currency in pastoralist systems); curtailment of mobility and range use; enforced settlements and urban emigration;

¹ For today, participating Indigenous Peoples Organizations include: Indigenous Environmental Network (North American and International); Indigenous Information Network (Africa); International Indian Treaty Council (North America, Central and South America and Pacific Region); TEBTEBBA (International); Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network (APIYN)

alienation of the young generation and loss of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and traditional institutions; and aid dependence syndrome. As a result, no real self-determined development has been possible.

Climate change is already a crisis for Indigenous Peoples. For example, in the Arctic Region and the Pacific Region the Indigenous Peoples are already losing their means of subsistence, face significant cultural changes, and are preparing to become environmental refugees. The world's rich and industrialised nations must immediately realize and react to the rate and extent of climate change, or many Indigenous populations will be devastated.