

**Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Session
Wednesday, May 3, 2006**

**Indigenous Peoples Caucus Statement on the Thematic Issue of Climate Change and
Atmospheric Pollutants**

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Mr. Chair and Distinguished Delegates

Indigenous Peoples are here representing the spirit, hearts and minds of many not speaking here. Our extended family includes our Mother Earth, Father Sky, and our brothers and sisters - the animal, fish, birds and plant life. We all bear the impacts of unsustainable economic and energy growth and obscene corporate greed. We have accepted the responsibility designated by our prophecies to tell the world that we must live in peace and harmony and ensure balance with the sacredness of our Mother Earth and Father Sky. A growing body of western scientific evidence now confirms what indigenous peoples have expressed for a long time: life as we know it is in danger.

There is no issue more significant and more urgent than global warming and climate change. These are linked to atmospheric pollution, expansion of extractive industries and unsustainable energy practices. The attendant social crisis of extreme poverty, hunger, displacement and landlessness, and rising child mortality among drought and disaster-stricken indigenous peoples and local communities - is forecast to worsen .

Climate change poses a significant threat to our communities in developing and developed countries. Indigenous peoples underline the importance of our participation in climate impact assessments that take into account indigenous knowledge, cultures, social values, and spirituality. Global warming directly impacts our physical and spiritual relationships with our lands and territories, the preservation of our cultures and heritage and our very survival .The participatory Arctic Climate Impact Assessment carried out by the Arctic Council, in partnership with indigenous communities, is a process which should be repeated in other parts of the world.

Our review has found that indigenous peoples from all global regions face obstacles limiting our full and effective participation at all levels of discussion, evaluation, decision-making, and implementation of measures to address climate change, including vulnerability and disparities of impact, mitigation, and adaptation.

Any climate change solution cannot and should not be separated from issues of social and environmental justice. Indigenous peoples are concerned that the modalities and procedures for activities under the Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM) do not respect nor guarantee our rights to land, territory, and self-determination. Sinks projects are particularly troubling. Confusing fossil carbon with biological carbon results in sinks being phantom reductions, which do not actually address the problem of climate change.

Solutions to the climate change problem must emphasize real, verifiable reductions in fossil fuel emissions. There must be transformation of carbon emissions trading regimes that value accountability, transparency, human rights, and social, cultural and environmental factors.

We welcome the European Directive that requires hydropower projects to be compliant with recommendations of the World Commission on Dams in order to qualify for credits under the European carbon market.

Mr. Chair, nuclear power is no solution to the global climate crisis. Many indigenous peoples and local communities have experienced the deadly effects of radioactive contamination from failed nuclear policies. In the U.S., the government and the nuclear power utility companies are planning to store the radioactive waste in the backyards of our Indigenous communities.

Furthermore, large-hydro dams are not climate friendly. Recent research indicates that dams and their reservoirs, particularly in the tropics, are globally significant sources of greenhouse gases. Moreover, global climate and severe weather changes are likely to negatively affect hydropower production and water storage, thus undermining energy security.

In conclusion, Indigenous peoples have significant contributions to make towards policy development and implementation of solutions to the energy and climate change problems. We assert our birth right to be included in all decision-making and implementation processes on these issues. Indigenous peoples may be experiencing the vulnerabilities of climate impacts, but we also have survived as sustainable communities for thousands of years and are producers of solutions. Let us give support to the Mother Earth Life-Givers and Life-Energy Sustainers.