

## **Indigenous Peoples' statement for the major group intervention session, land Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

IPM Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development  
February 23-27, 2009, United Nations, New York, New York

Land rights are crucial in ensuring the survival for Indigenous Peoples around the world. Land is and has been the centre of numerous conflicts involving indigenous communities, particularly as a result of globalization. The impact of new economic processes can be dramatic as seen in many new agricultural modernizations. Agricultural and other economic activities in Indigenous Peoples lands have to be accompanied by integrated and holistic management of natural resources like biodiversity, forests and watersheds which are crucial to the survival of indigenous peoples worldwide. Livelihoods can be sustained if policies guiding the exploitation and use of land and natural resources address the dual challenges of resource conservation and poverty reduction. There is need therefore as Policy priorities to:

- It is important to respect, recognize and promote indigenous peoples' customary laws on the ownership, use and management of lands and resources for their continued survival and well-being
- Reform land laws and agrarian policies towards secure tenure and land rights for indigenous peoples. It is important then to ensure the participation of Indigenous peoples in the process of these reforms.
- Recognize the multiple environmental, social, cultural and spiritual values of land, sea and natural resources and the cosmovisions of indigenous peoples
- Promote food sovereignty based on the rights to food and self-determination and further promote options that do not depend on agriculture yet provide income opportunity such as agribusiness and food transport, tourism and handicrafts.
- Adopt trade policies that promote and sustain indigenous production and livelihoods in agro-forestry, livestock, marine and other traditional occupations and local, regional and national markets
- Global Poverty is overwhelming and Indigenous Peoples remain the poor of the poorest. There is need then to improve the infrastructure, security, communication, human and social capital, promote non farming employment and manage the land and natural resource in a sustainable way with full recognition of traditional institution of indigenous Peoples.
- Special policies and provisions are required to ensure that women own and manage land and natural resource and retain control over income generating asserts in their own respective communities. Women should be guaranteed representation in decision-making at all levels.

Thank you Madam Chair.

*Presented for Indigenous Peoples major group by Lucy Mulenkei- Indigenous Information Network*