

## **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' CAUCUS<sup>1</sup> (MAJOR GROUP) OPENING STATEMENT**

**16<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development  
05 May 2008, United Nations, New York, New York**

Mr. Chair, and distinguished delegates,

Indigenous peoples' traditional livelihoods, including shift cultivation, rotational farming, hunting, gathering, agro-forestry, pastoralism and fishing, have proven, over time, to be highly resilient resource management systems for our peoples, our culture and nature.

Traditional varieties of seeds, medicines, plants and livestock, alongside indigenous knowledge, innovations and practices are, today, essential elements for achieving our food security, food sovereignty and society's adaptations to drought, desertification and climate change. Agro-fuels, GMOs and petro-chemical fixes are compounding local poverty, whilst enriching global corporations.

The recent adoption by the General Assembly of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides a universal framework and the necessary foundation, for securing our rights to lands, waters, resources, and calling for the full and effective participation in decision-making about sustainable development, at all levels.

Mr. Chair, the Indigenous Peoples greatly appreciate the opening statement of the Slovenia delegate, on behalf of EU, for their recognition of the vital role of Indigenous Peoples in sustainable development and for the protection of our rights.

All UN member states have the obligation to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is imperative that the member states recognize and establish legal frameworks on sustainable development mandates and all issues related to Indigenous Peoples, especially in Africa and Small Island States.

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<sup>1</sup> For today, includes the Indigenous Peoples Organizations: 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)