

Press information for immediate release (22nd November 2004)

Indigenous Peoples repudiate press report

Indigenous Peoples at the World Conservation Congress today reacted strongly to coverage in The Nation newspaper. They rejected the article 'Tribal Group Denied Access to Congress' (Sunday 21 November 2004).

Mililani Trask, Indigenous Expert for the Pacific on the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, today said

“The purpose of the press conference was to discuss the critically important Resolution put forward by Indigenous Peoples here. We have been really encouraged by the extent of support shown to this resolution by state and non-state members of the IUCN”.

The emergency resolution had garnered seventy seven sponsors before being presented to the Resolutions Committee, a level of solidarity rarely seen at the Union.

Indigenous Peoples have noted growing support for their concerns within the conservation community. A watershed was reached in Durban where conservationists committed themselves to a 'new paradigm' on protected areas which respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples have gathered here in Bangkok to ensure that the significant commitments made in Durban become part of the IUCN's work over the coming decade.

The report in The Nation misrepresented the key issues presented by the Indigenous peoples' representatives who spoke to the press in Community Mooban last Thursday. Indigenous Peoples are concerned at the lack of attention given by the press to the wide range of issues of real concern to Indigenous Peoples, instead the press has invented false grievances for sensational ends. Indigenous Peoples reject this manipulation of their agenda.

“Indigenous Peoples are seeking to seriously engage with the IUCN on matters of substance. This kind of reporting only hinders a useful dialogue. We need the support of the media to faithfully convey our concerns, not to distort our message”

said Alberto Saldamando of the International Indian Treaty Council.

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Press Information 19 November 2004

Indigenous Peoples at the 3rd WCC

Building on the significant gains made at the Vth World Parks Congress and the COP7 of the CBD, Indigenous Peoples have again come together in solidarity in a delegation to this, the 3rd World Conservation Congress. Under the title 'People and Nature' the Congress for us is an opportunity to build on the achievements of Indigenous Peoples advocacy over the past 30 years, advocacy aimed at securing recognition and respect for our fundamental rights as Indigenous Peoples. Specifically we would like to draw attention to the emergence of a 'new paradigm' for conservation which acknowledges and respects our rights and responsibilities over our lands, territories and resources. It is now widely recognized by the conservation community, *inter alia* in the CBD and the IUCN through the outcomes of the Vth World Parks Congress, that without prior recognition of our status as traditional owners of our lands, territories and resources the goal of conservation in our territories is impossible to achieve. In recognition of the strong partnerships needed to protect our sacred Mother Earth we are gathered here to speak to all parties interested in conservation, to share our knowledge and to call for recognition of our central role in the goal we share with you, the goal of conservation. It is well known that 80 % of the world's biodiversity is found in our lands and territories. We gather here as representatives of our peoples, drawn from the four corners of our Mother Earth. We call for our voices to be heard and our rights and knowledge to be recognized, respected and promoted. We call for all participants at this, the 3rd World Conservation Congress, to listen to our voices.

The outcomes of the Vth World Parks Congress are rightly regarded as guiding principles for conservation and natural resource use and management in the future. In particular, we would like to recall for all participants now the recommendation of the WPC that the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission be considered in order to provide redress for the serious violations of our human rights that have been committed in the name of conservation and development. These violations must never be repeated.

URGENT Resolution

In the 114 resolutions that have been submitted to the IUCN Council for consideration there is much that is of importance to Indigenous Peoples. However in this Press Conference we would like to draw attention to the urgent need for a Resolution specifically addressing the needs and demands of Indigenous Peoples. The regulations of the IUCN allow for the presentation of emergency resolutions if the need is demonstrably urgent and if IUCN members in standing extend their support to such a resolution. In our consultations and preparatory processes, culminating in a Preparatory Meeting on the 16th of November here in Bangkok, we have created such a resolution reflecting the needs of our peoples throughout the world. The full text of this resolution is available through the secretariat of the Ad Hoc Working Group for Indigenous Peoples at the 3rd WCC. It is essential to the realization of the central goal of the IUCN – the 'creation of a just world'

Indigenous Peoples Ad Hoc Working Group to the World Conservation Congress

– that the voices of Indigenous Peoples are heard. Without us you can not achieve the goals that you have set, for it is us who live with, conserve, use, control and protect the biodiversity in our lands and territories. In order for the goals of the IUCN and for all of us here to be achieved, for effective and sustainable use and conservation of the world's biodiversity to be realized, Indigenous Peoples are central. We refer you here to the decisions of the COP7 of the CBD which we would like to see made real in this important Congress. In Decision 7.23 of the Conference all parties to the Convention noted that “the establishment, management and planning of protected areas should take place with the full and effective participation of, and **full respect for the rights of, indigenous and local communities**”. Here at the 3rd World Conservation Congress we call for members of the IUCN to build on these decisions, to build on the work done by the conservation community in the past, and to allow the presentation of an urgent resolution by Indigenous Peoples. For this to happen, the resolution must be demonstrably urgent and have wide-spread support among members of IUCN. The resolution, which has been circulated among members of the IUCN over the past few days, has received widespread support from both government and non-government members of the IUCN. Seventy-seven members have signed the Resolution, an extraordinary demonstration of support for an urgent late submission. We call on the wider community and the members of the IUCN who will be voting on all resolutions during the Business Assembly next week, to vote in favor of this resolution. With this act, you can all make concrete the gains that we have worked so hard to achieve.

In solidarity, the Indigenous Peoples' Caucus.