

INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FORUM ON CLIMATE CHANGE:
Statement for Contact Group on Sinks

4 December 2003

Mr. Chairman Sir, Respected delegates my colleagues, brothers and sisters. I thank the chairman for the privilege of addressing this contact groups with the urgent and critical concerns of indigenous peoples around the world.

We should directly like to address our concerns regarding Appendix E and the issues related to its text.

We acknowledge and support that the prerogatives of the State cannot and must not be set aside in any process regarding the well being of its citizens. However we should like to also acknowledge the importance of international standards particularly on issues impinging on the human rights of people and peoples, and even more on issues that directly impact the world's survival.

It is true, though unfortunate and perhaps, given the inequity of the global economy and technological capacities that many countries, particularly those in transition or with developing economies, do not have the capacity to formulate or ensure the necessary minimum standards for environmental or social safeguards of indigenous peoples.

Therefore, international norms and standards in environmental and social accounting for sinks where they may not be avoided by better processes, must be instituted and accepted by all countries in the spirit of the Kyoto Protocol.

A key question in this regard is one also of prior informed consent of stakeholders and even more so of rights holders such as indigenous peoples. These too have been acknowledged widely in a multitude of processes regarding both sustainable development and environmental safeguards. This must be clearly and explicitly reflected in the final proposal on modalities and procedures of activities of afforestation / reforestation under the Kyoto Protocol.

I should like to bring to the group's attention that the CDM process almost alone of all the environment focussed standard setting processes in the UN excludes indigenous peoples from the recognised position as the spokespersons on behalf of the earth and of our peoples as its ancient and traditional guardians and custodians.

Thank you for your attention and consideration