

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' CAUCUS (MAJOR GROUP) STATEMENT  
ON THE HIGH LEVEL MINISTER SEGMENT**

**13<sup>th</sup> United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development  
21 April 2005, United Nations, New York, New York**

*Presented by:*

*Tom Goldtooth, Indigenous Environmental Network/International Indian Treaty Council on behalf of the CSD 13 Indigenous Peoples Caucus (Major Group)  
Indigenous Peoples Caucus Input Group: Estebancio Castro Diaz (Panama), IITC; Lucy Mullenkei (Kenya), Indigenous Information Network*

Theme of presentation: Major groups will outline their own aspirations and priorities for action.

Mr. Chair, honorable ministers and all participants at the CSD13, as Indigenous Peoples we are duly bound to remind our human brothers and sisters we must recognize, honor and respect water as sacred. Our traditional knowledge, laws and ways of life teach us to speak out to the world on the responsibility in caring for this sacred gift that connects all life.

We recall the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation (JPOI) of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002, where governments had reaffirmed the vital role of Indigenous Peoples in sustainable development. We further recall during the UN Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992, governments recognized that Indigenous Peoples have a critical role in managing our environment and implementing development strategies. The importance of Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge and practices was acknowledged, and the international community committed itself to promoting, strengthening and protecting the rights, knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples and our communities.

Today, the Indigenous Peoples' Major Group reaffirms our commitment to honour, to care for, and to protect water, as our fundamental contribution towards reinforcement of a global commitment towards implementing Agenda 21, the JPOI and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Water, sanitation and human settlement brings up concerns of equity, self-determination and human rights of Indigenous Peoples. For Indigenous peoples, any action-oriented and productive implementation of the JPOI and the MDGs, particularly in States where Indigenous peoples live, would require the right of self-determination of Indigenous Peoples to be recognized in the CSD13 negotiated text.

Indigenous Peoples assert that we are rights-holders not mere stakeholders, and so aspire to high standards of effective participation and protocols in all matters affecting our lives, territories and well-being. The Indigenous Peoples full and effective participation in the planning, development and implementation of the policies regarding water, sanitation and human settlement requires the full recognition, maintenance and financial support of traditional Indigenous institutions and Indigenous community-based organizations by the States and other financial mechanisms.

Governments, corporations and intergovernmental organizations must, under international human rights standards require Indigenous Peoples free, prior and informed consent and consultation by cultural appropriate means in all decision-making activities regarding water, sanitation and human settlement and all matters that may have affect.

Related to ODA, we fully support the demand to have donor governments fulfill their commitment of 0.7% ODA. But beyond this we bring to your attention the limited amount of ODA that comes into our Indigenous communities. In many cases the ODA is used for projects which are not needed or relevant for Indigenous Peoples. In some cases the ODA even leads to the destruction of our sustainable production and resource management systems.

Mr. Chair, in conclusion, the Indigenous Peoples Major Group has aspirations and priorities for action as outlined in the Major Groups' Priorities for Action document [E/CN.17/2005/5]. However, any achievement towards targets and commitments for action cannot be fully realized without the negotiated document of the CSD13 to include the specific mention of Indigenous peoples within appropriate sections, as it does with women and youth. The lack of recognition of Indigenous peoples within the negotiated text could represent the biggest obstacle to realizing our fullest contribution and abilities toward addressing water, sanitation and human settlement challenges.

Thank you.