

UN Commission on Sustainable Development 14th Session
Thematic Discussion Session
Tuesday, May 9, 2006

Indigenous Peoples Caucus Statement within the Morning Thematic Session on “*Enhancing the Contributions of the Private Sector and Other Stakeholders in Addressing Air Pollution and Atmospheric Problems, Combating Climate Change and Promoting Industrial Development*”

By

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The Indigenous Peoples Caucus would like to make a few points concerning barriers and constraints of business and private sector investments and operations within indigenous peoples territories and lands. Securing investments for sustainable energy initiatives within indigenous communities and villages is a serious priority in both developing and developed countries. However, it is our observations that before sustaining relationships could be established between the private sector and indigenous communities, the following observations are made.

The current regime of industrial and energy related development within the territories of indigenous peoples, world wide, has a long history of human rights violations against our peoples. Some examples of these developments are: large hydro dams; oil and gas extraction, production and processing; coal and uranium mining; nuclear waste dumping from the nuclear energy industry; resulting in human and ecological health impacts from atmospheric pollutants and climate change.

There is a need for mechanisms for the private sector and investors to recognize the self-determination and rights of indigenous peoples, as well as the principles of human rights.

Within these thematic sessions, there has been recognition that good governance is a pre-requisite for effective investments in sustainable energy and in actions to resolve issues of climate change and atmospheric pollution. Barriers exist within countries that demand the strengthening and increasing the transparency of administrative and legal frameworks especially within policy and implementation of targets and timelines from Agenda 21 and JPOI.

Good governance is equally important at a corporate level. In the aftermath of Enron and WorldCom, it is essential for corporations and the private sector to continue to demonstrate best practices in corporate governance.

Barriers of trust is a real issue in formulating dialogue and partnerships between the private sector and indigenous and local communities. There is an increased need for corporations to improve social and environmental performance – and especially in the assessment of cultural sensitive impacts. At the WSSD, there was a strong call from many NGOs and civil society for mandatory rules on Corporate Social Responsibility. Within the territories of indigenous peoples and local communities, the private sector must demonstrate corporate accountability, and this should take place within a transparent and regulatory environmental framework with effective enforcement and compliance of environmental and health laws.

Thank you.

