

Thematic Dialogue Session
Wednesday, May 3, 2006

Indigenous Peoples Caucus Statement within the Afternoon Thematic Session on Meeting
Growing Needs for Energy Services through Increased Use of Renewable Energy

By

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Mr. Chair,

Within the United States our Indigenous network is working with other Indigenous organizations and tribes in pursuing alternative clean energy development as our contribution to address these critical issues of global warming that is caused by the fossil fuel industry. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that 75% of the electricity demand in the lower 48th parallel of the U.S. could be produced by wind resources in a region we call the Great Plains, which is a rural area of the U.S.

The wind power potential for twelve of our Indigenous tribes in the Great Plains states of North and South Dakota alone, has the potential to exceed 250 gigawatts of power.

Renewable energy development within the indigenous territories of both the U.S. and Canada can help our indigenous tribes in the development of sustainable homeland economies, as well as providing energy security to the country at large.

In the state of South Dakota, within the U.S., the Rosebud Lakota indigenous tribe has successfully installed a 750 kilowatt wind turbine. Through the leadership of our indigenous peoples, there is a plan to pursue more such developments within the next ten years.

Renewable energy generated on indigenous lands and territories can have significant public health, environment, economic, social and legal benefits for indigenous peoples. Mechanisms for the further development of locally-indigenous controlled wind power and renewable energy projects throughout the world would help address indigenous sustainable development goals.

At this point, the cheapest source of renewable energy is wind power.

Some things to reflect as lessons learned is these indigenous wind power projects must have meaningful and proactive consultation between the federal national government and the indigenous leadership and community as well as providing technical and financial assistance to the indigenous tribes.

In the words of one of our indigenous woman leaders in the U.S., "Make wind, not war."