



**An Appeal to the General Assembly on the  
Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

After many years of negotiation between member states and representatives of indigenous peoples and human rights organizations, the Human Rights Council adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on June 29, 2006.

In September 2005, at its summit meeting, the General Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to continue making progress in the advancement of the human rights of the world's indigenous peoples at the local, national, regional and international levels, including through consultation and collaboration with them, and to present for adoption a final draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as soon as possible.

Whereas indigenous persons, of course, have in principle all the human rights of every other person in the world, the specific circumstances of indigenous peoples in numerous countries have long limited the full enjoyment of these rights. This has been documented over the years by the Human Rights Commission and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as well as numerous other institutions.

Therefore, many states have by now affirmed the specific rights of indigenous peoples in their domestic legislation, and several international bodies and agencies have done so through a number of conventions, resolutions and declarations. The jurisprudence of regional human rights mechanisms has also emphasized that specific rights must be recognized and special protection measures are required to ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights by indigenous peoples and their communities.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes these developments and responds to the needs and aspirations of indigenous peoples with a solid and comprehensive instrument that reflects the various perspectives and concerns of the member states and the peoples concerned. Like so many United Nations instruments, it represents a negotiated compromise and becomes an important contribution to the construction of a truly universal human rights protection system that all the peoples of the United Nations should indeed welcome. It is significant that the Human Rights Council adopted the Declaration during its very first session.

Having been mandated by the competent UN bodies (the Human Rights Council and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues) to contribute to the furthering of the human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as other issues of concern to indigenous peoples, we take this opportunity to appeal to the members of the General Assembly to adopt the Declaration without delay at its present session.

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