

News from the
INTERNATIONAL
FORUM ON
GLOBALIZATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
29 August 2007

Contact:
Claire Greensfelder
+1.510.917.5468

INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF NGOS CALLS FOR ADOPTION OF THE
UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

DENOUNCES CANADA, NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA
FOR “HUMAN RIGHTS HYPOCRISY” IN LEADING THE OPPOSITION
TO THE DECLARATION

PROTESTS AT THREE MISSIONS to the UN TO BE HELD ON
THURSDAY, AUGUST 30TH, 2007
PRESS CONFERENCE AND RALLY IN FRONT OF
CANADIAN MISSION TO THE UN
AT 12 NOON

1 – Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza (885 2nd Avenue at 47th St)

TO BE FOLLOWED BY MARCH TO MISSIONS OF
NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA

New York, New York: In an urgent effort in support of the upcoming vote (tentatively scheduled for September 13th) in the UN General Assembly on United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, over two dozen national and international NGOs in the United States and Canada have come to New York City to announce their support for Indigenous peoples rights and to protest the opposition to the Declaration being led by the governments of Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

Jerry Mander, Founder and Co-Director of the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) of San Francisco, the convening organization and secretariat of The Emergency Coalition of NGOs in Support of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, said:

“We are appalled by this action of human rights hypocrisy—especially coming from the governments of Canada and New Zealand, countries that are traditionally considered global leaders for human rights.” Mander continued, “We call upon them to immediately stop their unprincipled campaign against the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

Among the signers to the statement of the Emergency Coalition are some of the world's largest human rights, development, environmental and indigenous rights organizations including **Oxfam America and Oxfam Australia, Friends of the Earth-US, Transafrica Forum, Survival International, the Sierra Club, Earth Rights International, Rainforest Action Network, International Rivers Network, Amazon Watch and the International Funders of Indigenous Peoples** (complete list attached).

Amnesty International - Canada has been waging its own energetic campaign in support of the Declaration and will participate in the press conference and protest in front of the Canadian Mission to the UN on Thursday August 30th. Amnesty Canada's international petition for the Declaration has been signed by 22,382 individuals from around the world, and states:

“Either the international community will move ahead with final adoption [of the Declaration] as has been urged by Indigenous peoples and their supporters worldwide, or adoption of the Declaration will once again be delayed due to the demands of a small, yet vocal group of states.”

In an open letter to Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, released on August 9th, the UN International Day of Indigenous Peoples, seven major Canadian non-governmental and First Nations' organizations, declared the Harper government's “efforts to block the adoption [of the Declaration] as a clear reversal of Canadian policy.”

The letter continued: “We are outraged that this reversal of policy was undertaken without meaningful consultation with Indigenous Peoples, despite a clear requirement under Canadian law” [to do so].

“Canada's Prime Minister Harper is risking not only his country's long-fought legacy as a human rights champion but also the future of the new UN human rights body that his country helped establish. Now more than ever, the world needs a strong Canada to stand up for indigenous rights,” said **Roxanne Lawson, International Policy Campaigner for Friends of the Earth-US**.

After 22 years of negotiations, the UN Declaration was adopted by the UN Human Rights Council during its inaugural session in June 2006, and recommended to the UN General Assembly for final passage. If the UN General Assembly fails to adopt the Declaration, it will represent a failure of the authority of the newly formed Human Rights Council and marks an uncertain start of this new body.

“The Emergency Coalition of NGOs in Support of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is standing with Indigenous nations around the world,” said **Rainy Blue Cloud, IFG's Emergency Coalition Campaigner**, “we absolutely support their demand that all governments vote in favor of the Declaration and we call on Canada, New Zealand and Australia, in particular, to cease their efforts to derail the process and to step up to their duty to protect the human rights of all peoples.”

The Declaration represents a significant recognition of the rights and fundamental freedoms of hundreds of millions of indigenous peoples around the world who suffer from human rights abuses such as forced relocation, seizure and exploitation of lands and resources and an adverse amount of poverty and discrimination. Indigenous languages, cultures and ways of life continue to be threatened without international legal protections.

The Declaration would provide moral and legal backing for several concepts seen as critical to the preservation of the collective rights of the world's estimated 370 million indigenous people, who belong to 5,000 communities and nations across 71 countries. These concepts include the rights to:

- Self-determination, autonomy and self government
- Education in indigenous languages
- Recognition of indigenous laws, customs and traditions
- Ownership and control of indigenous territories and natural resources

The Declaration would also empower indigenous peoples to defend their ancestral lands, often home to some of the world's most pristine ecosystems and rarest biodiversity, against the operations of the extractive industries such as mining and oil and gas drilling.

Blue Cloud continued: "According to the latest calculations, the Declaration just needs a handful of additional votes in the General Assembly. If it fails to win a majority, it may be years before the General Assembly will consider it again. It is imperative that the Declaration be approved in the next two weeks."

* * *

**SCHEDULE OF PROTEST / PRESS EVENTS
THURSDAY 30 AUGUST 2007
NEW YORK CITY**

**12:00 noon Rally & Press Conference
Outside the Permanent Canadian Mission to the United Nations
1 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza – 885 2nd Avenue at 47th Street**

Statements by Canadians and other International NGO's
Delivery of letter from the Emergency Coalition to the Canadian Ambassador

12:45 PM March to The Permanent Mission of New Zealand

**1:00 PM Rally & press statements
Outside of the Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the UN
One UN Plaza at 44th Street**

Statements by Pacific Islander representatives and Intl NGO's
Delivery of Emergency Coalition letter to New Zealand's Ambassador

1:30 PM March to the Australian Mission to the UN

**1:45 PM Rally & Press Statements
Outside the Permanent Mission of Australia to the UN
150 East 42nd Street (between Lexington & 3rd)**

Statements by Australian and International NGO's
Delivery of Emergency Coalition letter to Australia's Ambassador

2:30 PM end of action

* * *

**Emergency NGO Coalition in Support of the
UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Emergency Coalition Secretariat:

The International Forum on Globalization

Emergency Coalition Partners:

ACODE-Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment, *Uganda*
Africa International Foundation – *USA, Kenya, Ghana, East Africa Chapters*
Amazon Alliance
Amazon Watch, *USA*
Arid Lands, Institute, *Kenya*
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
Cultural Survival
EarthRights International
Flying Eagle Woman Fund, *USA*
Four Freedoms Foundation, *USA*
Friends of the Earth, *USA*
Global Exchange, *USA*
Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights, *USA*
INOCHI/Plutonium Free Future, *USA/Japan*
Indigenous Environmental Network, *USA*
International Funders of Indigenous Peoples
International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
International Rivers Network
Missionary Oblates, Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Ministry, *USA/Italy*
Oceania Human Rights, *USA*
Oil Change International
Oxfam America
Oxfam Australia
Rainforest Action Network
Rigoberta Menchu Fund
Sierra Club, *USA*
Solidarity Foundation, *USA*
Survival International
Transafrica Forum, *USA*
United Nations Association – *USA, East Bay Chapter, California*

(list in formation)

For more information, or to join the Emergency Coalition, please contact:

Rainy Blue Cloud, Campaigner

Emergency NGO Coalition to Support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

+1.530.559.0192

rbluecloud@ifg.org

-- END --

