

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' CAUCUS

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UN affirms Indigenous Peoples are not equal to all other Peoples

The Indigenous Caucus is shocked and outraged by the actions of the United Nations, who today failed to adopt the most important international instrument for the promotion and protection of human rights for Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which represents more than 20 years of work within the UN, constitutes the minimum standards for their survival, dignity and well-being.

The newly created UN Human Rights Council, which is the premier international body to deal with human rights, adopted the Declaration in June of this year. The Declaration was one of the substantial achievements of the Council. However, it was delivered a huge blow today by African States, most of whom had chosen not to participate throughout this standard-setting process. Africa took the lead in blocking the adoption of the Declaration, which strategy was supported and encouraged by New Zealand, Canada, Australia and the United States.

It is clear that these actions are a politicization of human rights that show complete disregard for the ongoing human rights abuses suffered by Indigenous Peoples. This betrayal and injustice severely impacts 370 million Indigenous people in all regions of the world, who are among the most marginalized and vulnerable.

On May 24, 2002, Secretary General Kofi Annan, had proclaimed that the world's Indigenous Peoples "have a home at the United Nations" However, today's vote by opposing States clearly demonstrates that this is not the case.

Indigenous Peoples Caucus
At UN Headquarters, New York

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