International Indigenous Forum of Biodiversity (IIFB) at Convention of Biodiversity

Eighth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity

7th-11th October 2013, Montreal, Canada

Opening Statement

Distinguished co-chairs,

We want to recognize the traditional territories of the Mohawk Nation and thank them for their ceremonial welcome this morning. On behalf of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB), we congratulate both of you on your election as co-Chairs for this meeting and thank the Secretariat for the preparation of the documents. Indigenous Peoples are gathered here from all the regions of the World.

We thank the Executive Secretary and the Parties for facilitating the participation of indigenous representatives through the Voluntary Fund (Spain, India, Norway, Finland, Switzerland, Sweden and Germany) and through the generous support received from SwedBIO who have been supporting the IIFB all through the CBD process.

The mid-term for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) and Aichi Biodiversity Targets is not far-off, and even though we appreciate the progress so far, the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in all CBD processes, for example in the revision of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), and national implementation remains a commitment on paper. The blunt reality is that Aichi Target 18 is not a major focus of State investment or concern, thus undermining Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities essential contributions to CBD implementation.

Increased and targeted funding is needed to support indigenous peoples and local communities to become full partners in the implementation of the CBD, including through community-based monitoring and information systems, using traditional knowledge and other indicators relevant for indigenous peoples.

Support for Indigenous Peoples and local communities is important in all regions, we face similar situations of marginalization, including in so-called developed countries.
The IIFB acknowledges and appreciates the efforts of the Executive Secretary in developing a draft plan of action for customary sustainable use. After several years of discussions about this matter, it is exciting to now have an actual work plan on 10(c) in front of us to further shape and discuss this week. We are fully committed to collaborate with you and Parties for an optimal outcome on this important matter.

On Item 4(b) on the development of Best Practice guidelines that would facilitate enhancement of the repatriation of traditional knowledge, the IIFB supports the organization of the Expert Group on Traditional Knowledge Repatriation with the full and effective participation of the representatives from indigenous peoples and local communities. We look forward to working with the parties on developing the terms of reference for this group and related supporting activities. Guidelines need to be developed in a holistic way, tied to traditional knowledge associated with the full range of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, not only genetic resources.

We are in general agreement with the prioritization of tasks in Item 4(c) on how tasks 7, 10 and 12 could best contribute to work under the Convention and to the Nagoya Protocol. However, we believe that capacity building is a significant task linked to task 7 that must be included as a priority action.

We are in general agreement with the prioritization of tasks in Item 4(c) on how tasks 7, 10 and 12 could best contribute to work under the Convention and to the Nagoya Protocol. However, we believe that capacity building is a significant task linked to task 7 that must be included as a priority action. Free, prior and informed consent requires that indigenous peoples understand fully the terms related to access and benefit sharing, their rights to allow or deny access and set the terms for the use of any shared traditional knowledge, and the full range of anticipated risks and benefits for any proposed actions.

The IIFB has been meeting in the last two days, in our preparatory meeting and we are fully committed to share our views and suggestions, we have prepared substantive responses on each of the agenda items for this meeting. In review of the documents prepared for the meeting we notice inconsistency in the use of terminology. We urge the Convention to be consistent in the use of terms as Free Prior and Informed Consent and Full and Effective
Participation throughout all the meeting documents. These are commonly recognized and are essential principles for us as Indigenous Peoples.

In the light of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples under the General Assembly next year, we urge parties to begin using the language of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities with the CBD, consistent with international practice.

Thank you co chairs.