

Understand that the whole point of your own existence depends on becoming a Keeper of Mother Earth.
 – Chief Arvol Looking Horse



A SACRED PLACE

AT THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Ubuntu Village, Johannesburg, South Africa
 World Summit on Sustainable Development
 August 26 – September 4, 2002

TRIBAL LINK FOUNDATION REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The most basic lessons of science are not sinking in. We know that we cannot survive as a species unless we continue to have oxygen to breathe, untainted soil to till and clean water to drink; yet, being fully aware of this, we continue to do great damage to our only life-support system – our sacred Mother Earth. This reality makes little sense. We study, we debate, we discuss the problems, the causes, and the possible solutions, but all to little effect. Is this progressive damage taking place because we assume that in the very near future some unknown technology will correct the multitude of problems that have lead us to this point?

If this faith in science has become our guiding principle it might be time to acknowledge that our belief system is failing us. Chief Arvol Looking Horse, the Nineteenth Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe of the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota Sioux Nations, is from a tradition that has a deep and completely different belief system. A system that, at its essence, is infused with the idea that we are responsible for our actions and interactions with every element of our surroundings. Nothing, and no one, is separate from nature. We *are* our surroundings; and now we are sick. “How can we allow this to happen?” Chief Looking Horse has asked, “Would we allow our own hearts and livers to be ripped out of our bodies just for someone’s profit?”

Chief Looking Horse is one of the hundreds of thousands of indigenous peoples on this globe that come from traditions that maintain strong spiritual relationships with the whole of this planet. They are restless with the talk, the debate, and the politics that has led to little or no change. They are speaking out, they are sharing the portent of their prophecies that say the time has come to act, to protect, and to heal the Earth.

The 1990’s held special spiritual significance for many of the indigenous participants from the Americas. In the Andes there are ancestral prophecies that say that, starting about 1490, a time of extreme sorrow for the “people of the land” would begin. During the next age, however, which begins 500 years later (the 1990’s), there would be a time of coming together, of partnership and union, when the Eagle of the North will fly with the Condor of the South and their combined efforts would bring healing to this Earth. In indigenous cultures throughout the Americas, similar prophecies exist about a time of sorrow and imbalance followed by a healing and re-balancing.

Ten years ago, in June 1992, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, indigenous peoples from all over the world came to participate. Also known as the Earth Summit, this global conference, brought together policy makers, diplomats, scientists, media, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from 179 countries and indigenous peoples from around the globe. Their goal was to reconcile the impact that human socio-economic activities had on the environment.

The Earth Summit brought global attention to the fact that the planet’s environmental problems were intimately linked to economic conditions and problems of social justice. It showed that environmental, social and economic needs must be brought into balance with each other for a long-term sustainable outcome.

Yet ten years after this revelation, the world’s environmental problems – climate change, the depletion of the ozone layer, deforestation, desertification and land degradation, depletion of biological diversity, pollution, and diminishing fresh water resources – still pose very serious threats to our fragile and precious Earth. The environment continues to disintegrate at a rapid speed, threatening all life on this planet.

At the Rio Conference, Indigenous Peoples gathered at an alternative conference site to express their urgent concerns and perspectives on these serious matters. It was at this gathering that the indigenous representatives also expressed their desire to fully participate in this global environmental conference at every level. Based on this original initiative, Tribal Link developed a project focusing on the creation of a space at the World Summit in Johannesburg, which could serve Indigenous Peoples in a similar fashion.

A SACRED PLACE IN UBUNTU VILLAGE AT THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (WSSD)

The result of Tribal Link's commitment to this vision was the creation of the Sacred Place at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The Summit took place from 26 August to 4 September 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa and brought together an estimated 35,000 participants, including Heads of State, government representatives, leaders of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the business sector and other interested participants. The Summit focused international attention on the difficult challenges the world faces in reconciling available natural resources with the needs of an ever-growing population for water, food, shelter, energy, health services and economic security.

The official UN conference took place at Sandton Convention Centre in the center of Johannesburg. Nearby, the Johannesburg World Summit Company (JOWSCO), on behalf of the government of South Africa, created Ubuntu Village, which served as a cultural and infrastructure hub, accessible to all and envisioned as the activities center of the Summit. It was like a small city within a city. It was a dynamic venue that attracted thousands of people daily, both active participants in the Summit as well as local citizens. It provided the opportunity for people from diverse cultures around the world to interact, share and showcase their projects, programs and unique cultures through exhibition and entertainment activities. There were also over 100 seminars, workshops and symposiums being conducted daily at different sites; these activities were sponsored by governments, UN agencies, NGOs, the business sector, academic institutions, and other organizations.

Ubuntu Village is where Tribal Link, in collaboration with the Johannesburg World Summit Company (JOWSCO), constructed the Sacred Place. Dee Mashinini, Manager of the Stakeholder Coordination for JOWSCO, understood the importance of the Sacred Place and was instrumental in making this idea become a reality.

The Sacred Place, amid the sometimes hectic activity at the Summit, was a quiet area of trees, a large open area of sun-bleached grass and a group of traditional style thatched huts. Sacred ceremonies and rituals were held beneath an open sky, and the indigenous dwellings were used for quiet reflection, meditation and prayer. Many of the delegates of the conference, as well as staff of Ubuntu Village, found this area to be a quiet sanctuary where they could retreat from the fast pace of the Summit. The Sacred Place also had a semi-enclosed stage area that was used as an information area and for more formal gatherings that took place. Our sign at the entrance of the site stated:

Ubuntu is an ancient, African code of values that includes the concept of mutual regard. This Sacred Place has been provided to enable groups to manifest the vital contribution of the spiritual dimension to the World Summit on Sustainable Development through rituals, ceremonies, prayer, meditations and other sacred activities. This Sacred Site has been given on trust; therefore, we humbly request that all who enter this area respect the specific intent of this sacred place. Failure to do so would represent a disregard of our gracious hosts and the African concept of Ubuntu.

Tribal Link sponsored a number of indigenous representatives from various regions of the world to participate in the Sacred Place and other venues at the WSSD. They included Angaangaq Liberth (Eskimo/Inuit) from Greenland; Francis Ole Sakuda, Director of Simba Maasai Outreach Organization in Kenya; Ole Mulo, a Maasai elder and peace negotiator; Roberto Mucaro Borrero (Taino), Chair of the United Nations NGO Committee on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples; and Marcos Terena (Terena) from Brazil, who was one of the main organizers of the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territory, Environment and Development held before

the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. Other members of the Tribal Link delegation were Mercedes Barrios Longfellow and Gerardo Barrios Kanek, Mayan spiritual leaders.

The opening ceremony for the Sacred Place began with a cleansing of the site by the Maasai after which Dr. Kgalushi Koka, a Zulu spiritual leader, addressed the crowd that had gathered, welcoming all to South Africa. The ceremony that followed held great significance and power as all the indigenous participants sat with Dr. Koka in a circle around an open fire, and each in turn gave thanks to the Earth and presented blessings from their own traditions. That first night, as these diverse yet interconnected indigenous traditions were brought together in one sacred ceremony, a strong spiritual presence filled the Sacred Place. This memorable evening ended with a warm and generous reception provided by Ranvir Singh, who donated food for the opening reception in remembrance of his mother and in honor of the Sikh tradition of offering food to the community.

The opening ceremony was the first of several compelling ceremonies that followed from the Mayan Fire Ceremony to the song and drum prayers of the Inuit, each with its own particular ritual, its own sacred power. In the same spirit of solidarity, created in the opening ceremony by the coming together of different traditions, indigenous women from all corners of the globe who were attending the Summit gathered together at the Sacred Place for a Water Ceremony. They had carried water with them to this conference from many distant lands, a symbolic gesture and one with a very direct point: clean water is of universal importance. It was a strikingly beautiful and poignant ceremony under a clear blue African sky. The Maasai delegates from Tribal Link offered their assistance and performed a cleansing ceremony to welcome the women to the Sacred Place.

While indigenous peoples played a key role at the Sacred Place, members of religious and spiritual communities also participated actively in the site by offering prayers, meditations, and interfaith activities. These activities included Sufi prayer and devotional music, Baha'i sponsored Tranquility Zones, and meditations held by the Brahma Kumaris, the Findhorn Foundation, the Art of Living, and the Catholic International Presentation. In addition, the Franciscans held a Celebration of Creation, and the Spiritual and Religious Caucus held their initial WSSD meeting at the Sacred Place. Meditations were conducted every morning at 10:00 am with the help of May East of the Findhorn Foundation, Rudolf Schneider of the Institute for Planetary Synthesis and Helen Sayers of the Brahma Kumaris.

Tribal Link's co-ordinating team made paint available so that visitors to the site could make paintings of their sacred symbols and images. The walls were beautifully painted with many indigenous and interfaith symbols, and a spot was also provided for people to place their sacred objects. At the end of the conference one wall in the Sacred Place was covered with green "earth ribbons". Each ribbon given out by the UN Earth Values Caucus represented a visitor's prayer or a healing thought for the Earth. The Sacred Place also provided an area where people could share their literature and put up flyers to publicize their events.

On August 30th, the Ark of Hope, which stores the original Earth Charter, was carried in a procession to one of the huts at the Sacred Place. Once inside, Miriam Viella, Executive Director of the Earth Charter project, and Sally Linder, Creator of the Ark of Hope, conducted a ceremony in its honor.

At the closing ceremony of the Sacred Place, again the convergence of all the varied and vibrant spiritual traditions created a sacred evening that appeared to have a deep effect on all that attended. During this Interfaith Celebration of Hope, presentations were offered by a range of faiths and traditions, from a Tibetan monk to Indigenous participants from different parts of the globe to a young South African woman whose voice filled the night with her song of hope. Roberto Múcaro Borrero also taught the audience an honouring song dedicated to Mother Earth, whom the Taíno People refer to as Attabey. Dadi Janki from the Brahma Kumaris shared words of wisdom to close the evening as the Sacred Place glowed, illuminated by a sea of tiny flames. It was a beautiful

transformation to watch as, one by one, each candle was lit and each person holding the small flickering light added to that glow. This final event was dedicated to the loving memory of Alexandra Meijer-Werner, a tireless advocate for the spiritual dimension and for indigenous causes; Gary Smith, an indigenous advocate; and for Angaangaq's mother.

The Sacred Place was a success in many tangible and intangible ways; an example of this was the *Faith in Action* initiative. The idea for this initiative was developed at the Sacred Place from the coming together of committed individuals and became a means to interact with the people of Johannesburg and offer service. Ranvir Singh, Synergy Association, John Van Dyk, Temple of Understanding and Diane Williams, Tribal Link and Temple of Understanding, decided to put their faith into action by transforming the humanitarian expressions of the WSSD into concrete acts. Singh suggested we deliver food, as that is tradition in the Sikh community and his Sikh organization financially sponsored the program, along with the Temple of Understanding. With this program, food bags were delivered to people affected by HIV in the local townships of Soweto and Alexandra, and to the Carl Sithole Children's Center, an AIDS orphanage in Soweto. The staff of Tribal Link took turns in helping to deliver the food and all were profoundly moved by this first hand experience of the overwhelming toll that AIDS is taking on the African people.

Tribal Link was fortunate to have a number of volunteers who helped to ensure that the Sacred Place was always staffed and functioning effectively. Tribal Link's staff members, Pamela Kraft, Executive Director, and Diane Williams, UN Representative coordinated these volunteers along with a small team of qualified professionals that included Roberto Borrero, Chair, UN NGO Committee on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples; Monica Willard, UN Representative for Pathways to Peace and consultant to the Interfaith Center of New York; Ranvir Singh, Synergy; John Van Dyk, Temple of Understanding; Brian Keane, Land as Life; Father Paul Mayer; Jane Coffey; and Dale van Rooyen.

The significance of the Sacred Place was its diverse and interactive appeal, which highlighted the continuous participation of Indigenous Peoples as well as representatives of various faith traditions, United Nations agencies and the general public. This dynamic and interactive environment also afforded unique networking opportunities, which served to incorporate the concerns and viewpoints of Indigenous Peoples within other initiatives taking place during the Johannesburg Summit. This important exchange was facilitated via Tribal Link's collaborative programming with other organizations and United Nations agencies.

TRIBAL LINK COLLABORATIONS AT THE WSSD

THE EQUATOR INITIATIVE – As part of UNDP's contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, UNDP has undertaken a major programme called the Equator Initiative. This initiative is aimed at honoring communities that have been successful at alleviating poverty while sustaining biodiversity through the "Innovative Partnership Awards for Sustainable Development in Tropical Ecosystems." A primary objective is to accelerate the south-south exchange of good practices which address the interface of biodiversity and poverty reduction. The Equator Initiative is a partnership with UNDP, Brasil Connects, the government of Canada, the International Development Research Center, the World Conservation Union, the Nature Conservancy, Television Trust for the Environment, and the United Nations Foundation.

The Equator Initiative and its partners constructed a "Community Kraal" in Ubuntu Village to enhance community partnerships. The Kraal served as a home space for Equator Initiative awardees and also representatives of partnering networks and organizations who share a commitment to this objective and who have invited representatives of their grassroots constituency to present their local interventions.

Tribal Link was asked to arrange for indigenous spiritual leaders to participate in the activities at the Community Kraal. They wanted to frame the activities honouring grassroots initiatives with a sense of the sacred and underscore the importance of traditional cultures. Spiritual leaders in our delegation conducted various ceremonies at the Kraal including the official opening ceremony, the group's orientation session, and the closing ceremony.

HEALING CIRCLE FOR THE EARTH – The intent of organizing the *Healing Circle for the Earth* program at WSSD was to bring together Indigenous Peoples who wished to offer symbolic healing ceremonies for the Earth and to highlight their profound connection with the natural world. The *Healing Circle for the Earth* took place at the civil society forum at the NASREC facility. The program was conducted outdoors and was led by Roberto Múcaro Borrero (Taíno), Koimarish Ole Mulo (Maasai), and Angaangaq Liberth (Eskimo/Inuit). This event also included a “commitment circle” where people came forward to express their personal commitment to participate in the healing of our planet Earth. Roberto Múcaro Borrero (Taíno), as a representative of the United Confederation of Taíno People, opened and closed this event by blowing the “Guamo” (conch shell), which is an ancient tradition of Caribbean Indigenous Peoples. The Healing Circle initiative was launched in collaboration with UNEP on February 1, 2002 at the WSSD Preparatory Conference held at United Nations Headquarters in New York. This program was officiated by Chief Arvol Looking Horse.

THE SPIRITUAL CAUCUS – Diane Williams, Tribal Link's UN Representative, facilitated and helped organize a meeting sponsored by the Spiritual Caucus called *Integrating the Spiritual Dimension of Sustainable Development into the Work of the UN*. This meeting included Angaangaq Liberth (Eskimo/Inuit); Kamla Chowdhry, Secretary General's Commission on Sustainable Development; Julia Grindon-Welch, Brahma Kumaris; and Carl Murrell, Bahai's.

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) – Tribal Link worked closely with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Communities for Renewal of the Earth (ICRE) to organize a dialogue session with Civil Society representatives to explore the moral and spiritual implications of preserving diversity in a globalizing world. This session was held at Ubuntu Village, and was in support of the high-level roundtable on “Cultural and Biological Diversity for Sustainable Development” that was jointly convened by the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on 3 September 2002 in the Inter-Continental Hotel. The meeting at Ubuntu was titled “Civil Society Dialogue Session on the Spiritual Implications of Promoting Biological and Cultural Diversity for Sustainable Development.”

The UNEP report quoted the welcoming sign for the Sacred Place that stated “Ubuntu” is the African philosophy and way of life. (See Appendix on page 9 for Report) It is an ancient African code of values that includes the concept of mutual regard and humanness.”

THE INDIGENOUS CAUCUS

Indigenous delegations and representatives from around the world attended the WSSD Summit in Johannesburg. Many of these participants met daily at the conference site in the form of the “Indigenous Caucus to the WSSD”. Indigenous Caucus participants also accessed the Sacred Place throughout the duration of the conference. One example of this interaction was manifested in a special “Indigenous Women's Water Ceremony”, which symbolically linked “water” as a vital and spiritual resource for Indigenous Peoples worldwide. It is important to note that the Indigenous Caucus also developed and distributed the “Kimberly Declaration” during the WSSD. (See Appendix on page 10 for the Kimberly Declaration text)

MEDIA

Tribal Link's activities at the Sacred Place during the World Summit on Sustainable Development were documented in the press. A feature was done in The Star – The World Summit Paper which included three separate articles: *Here to Melt the Ice in the Hearts of Man* – featuring Tribal Link's Representative Angaangaq, Inuit from Greenland; another was called *Bringing a People's Ancient Wisdom to the Negotiations* featuring Francis Ole Sakuda and Ole Mulo, two other representatives sponsored by Tribal Link; and the third article featured Mercedes Barrios Longfellow and Gerardo Barrios, Mayan Spiritual Leaders who conducted many rituals at the Sacred Place. Mr. Barrios' photograph was also featured on the front page of the Earth Times – Summit Star. In addition, TV Africa and other media frequently attended our activities and reported on them. Jane Coffey, a freelance writer, served as the media representative for the Sacred Place.

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THE INTENT AND OUTCOME OF THE SACRED PLACE

Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, defined the importance of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

We live on our planet, connected in a delicate, intricate web of ecological, social, economic and cultural relationships that shape our lives. If we are to achieve sustainable development, we will need to display greater responsibility - for the ecosystems on which all life depends, for each other as a single human community, and for the generations that will follow our own, living tomorrow with the consequences of the decisions we take today.

– Kofi Annan

But what motivates someone to take this greater responsibility, to look at the world in such a way that a lasting and effective solution takes hold? It is the view of the Tribal Link Foundation that the inclusion of the “sacred” into the process of global sustainability and the input and involvement of Indigenous Peoples on a global level is essential to conserving natural resources and protecting our environment for the generations to follow. When something is held as sacred there is an instinctive understanding that it must not be destroyed. How then do we recapture the idea that the Earth, our life support, our Mother, is indeed sacred? By providing a place at the WSSD for indigenous spiritual leaders to come and address these issues through their own spiritual worldviews, Tribal Link recognized the opportunity to integrate the sacred into this process of global decision-making.

The presence of Indigenous Peoples at relevant world forums to represent their concerns and values remains a

priority of Tribal Link Foundation and we were pleased to see their participation at the WSSD. The physical presence of Indigenous Peoples and the wisdom they shared added a profound spiritual dimension not often seen at these types of conferences. The Sacred Place added another important element to Indigenous Peoples' participation as it served not only as a ceremonial site and meeting place for Indigenous Peoples, but also as a place for valuable interaction with representatives of governments, members of the UN community, NGOs, business leaders, the media, and civil society. Tribal Link was also honoured that individuals from the local community participated in the many events held at the Sacred Place. All these diverse peoples were not only able to experience different ways that Indigenous Peoples express their sacred relationship with nature, but they also had a rare opportunity to directly participate in these processes. Although the Sacred Place was primarily created to provide a comfortable and safe area for indigenous spiritual leaders to conduct their ceremonies during the WSSD, other traditions and religious groups were encouraged to share their expression of the sacred and how they honour nature. In creating this atmosphere of mutual respect and sharing, different cultures were able to learn about each other's traditions with the ideal of "respect for nature" as a focal point.

Tribal Link fully supports and continues to work to develop opportunities in which Indigenous Peoples are able to express their concerns and share their worldview as equal participants within international civil and political systems. In demonstrating our commitment to this process, Tribal Link's collaborative programs at the WSSD afforded several opportunities for indigenous spiritual representatives and their messages to be incorporated into the surrounding forums outside of the Sacred Space. It is our hope that these linkages will assist in bringing about a positive change for both the current conditions and circumstances of many Indigenous Peoples as well as for a transformation in how the world approaches the challenges of sustainability on this planet. As we have learned from the examples shared by Indigenous Peoples around the world, this transformation will require a better understanding of how to have a sacred relationship with all of our surroundings and it involves a type of communication that occurs at the most profound and spiritual levels. It remains the view of Tribal Link Foundation that the traditional knowledge and experiences that the world's Indigenous Peoples are willing to share will help to positively transform this relationship at a global level.

APPENDIX

UNEP REPORT

COMPILED BY UNEP NGO LIAISON FABIENNE FON SING

The venue, as its name suggests, was very conducive to this discussion. Among the issues discussed were the ethical challenges facing the promotion of cultural and biological diversity, as well as the establishment of a permanent mechanism to provide an ethical perspective to the ongoing work of sustainable development. The meeting supported the UNEP initiative in linking up biological and cultural diversity in achieving sustainable development. The intention to hold a follow-up session after roundtable to re-examine the insights in light of the high-level roundtable's deliberations was discussed.

The following themes emerged from this exchange, and it was hoped that these would be conveyed to the high-level discussion of 3 September.

The meeting recognized the strong link between cultural and biological diversity, as examined in particular in the UNEP publication "Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity", and commended UNEP for bringing it to the forefront at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It is timely that this subject matter be explored further at the WSSD and the implementation of its outcomes designed. Taught and ingrained values, beliefs and ethics spur us to take action. The participants agreed that exploring what motives respect for and the protection of diversity needs to be linked to the implementation of any agenda, in this case Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Although cultural and biological diversity holds many and differing meanings for us all, it is generally agreed that biodiversity loss must be halted, and in this regard, Governments at the Earth Summit in Rio created the Convention on Biological Diversity. In a similar way, cultural diversity, which typically thrives in communities, in particular, indigenous communities where the richness of cultures disappears alongside the loss of biodiversity, cultural diversity like biological diversity must also be conserved and shared. It was conveyed to the Ubuntu gathering that over 260 non-governmental organizations attending the World Summit affirmed their belief that a Convention on Cultural Diversity is needed and would represent a successful outcome of the second Earth Summit in Johannesburg.

In order to enable the integration of cultural and biological diversity in advancing the cause of sustainable development, the following concrete suggestions were offered:

CODES AND CHARTERS: The Earth Charter, which has received recognition at the WSSD, can provide a framework for addressing the challenges of diversity. UNEP and other relevant UN bodies, including UNESCO, could develop a code of ethics on the issue of cultural and biological diversity and set up a commission to promote this dimension.

EDUCATION: Education and learning processes play a key role in shaping the consciousness of human beings. In this context, values and ethics concerning diversity and sustainable development should be integrated into educational curricula at all levels. The UN should consider sponsoring a World Service Corps for Sustainable Development that would allow young adults to experience other cultures and exchange approaches to sustainable development.

MEDIA: The media which has great potential for shaping perceptions should promote awareness of how diversity and traditional knowledge works to foster sustainable development.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY: In making use of the natural and humans resources for their operations, corporations should duly acknowledge their debt to them. "People before profits" should be the ethics of all corporations.

UN CONFERENCES: All sectors, including local people, should be engaged in the preparation process of UN conferences to establish the link between the global and the local.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY: While expecting the UN and corporations to take into consideration the need to respect cultural and biological diversity, it is recognized that personal attitudes and actions to further promote and meet the challenges of working with diversity are also required.

MECHANISMS: A Permanent Commission on Environmental Ethics and Justice should be established, and a code of ethics as mentioned earlier should be a part of this initiative. UNEP as the "environmental conscience" of the UN should consider expanding the role of the Civil Society Forum, in conjunction with its Governing Council meetings, by convening cross-sectoral dialogues between Governments, NGOs, Private Sector, and local people.

UN SPONSORED PROJECTS: UN sponsored projects should have an integral approach that would include in its management local knowledge along with conventional "expert" knowledge."

THE KIMBERLEY DECLARATION

INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Khoi-San Territory, Kimberley, South Africa, August 2 – 23, 2002

“We, the Indigenous Peoples, walk to the future in the footprints of our ancestors.”

- Kari-Oca Declaration, Brazil, 30 May 1992

We the Indigenous Peoples of the World assembled here reaffirm the Kari-Oca Declaration and the Indigenous Peoples’ Earth Charter. We again reaffirm our previous declarations on human and environmental sustainability.

Since 1992 the ecosystems of the earth have been compounding in change. We are in crisis. We are in an accelerating spiral of climate change that will not abide unsustainable greed.

Today we reaffirm our relationship to Mother Earth and our responsibility to coming generations to uphold peace, equity and justice. We continue to pursue the commitments made at the Earth Summit as reflected in this political declaration and the accompanying plan of action. The commitments which were made to Indigenous Peoples in Agenda 21, including our full and effective participation, have not been implemented due to the lack of political will.

As peoples, we reaffirm our rights to self-determination and to own, control and manage our ancestral lands and territories, waters and other resources. Our lands and territories are at the core of our existence—we are the land and the land is us; we have a distinct spiritual and material relationship with our lands and territories and they are inextricably linked to our survival and to the preservation and further development of our knowledge systems and cultures, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem management.

We have the right to determine and establish priorities and strategies for our self-development and for the use of our lands, territories and other resources. Free, prior and informed consent must be obtained before the approval of any project affecting our lands, territories and other resources.

We are the original peoples tied to the land by our umbilical cords and the dust of our ancestors. Our special places are sacred and demand the highest respect. Disturbing the remains of our families and elders is desecration of the greatest magnitude and constitutes a grave violation of our human rights. We call for the full and immediate repatriation of all Khoi-San human remains currently held in museums and other institutions throughout the world, as well as all the human remains of all other Indigenous Peoples. We maintain the rights to our sacred and ceremonial sites and ancestral remains, including access to burial, archaeological and historic sites.

The national, regional and international acceptance and recognition of Indigenous Peoples is central to the achievement of human and environmental sustainability. Our traditional knowledge systems must be respected, promoted and protected; our collective intellectual property rights must be guaranteed and ensured. Without traditional knowledge holders’ free, prior and informed consent, traditional knowledge is not in the public domain and is protected cultural and intellectual property under customary law. Unauthorized use and misappropriation of traditional knowledge is theft.

Economic globalization constitutes one of the main obstacles for the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Transnational corporations and industrialized countries impose their global agenda on the negotiations and agreements of the United Nations system, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and other bodies which reduce the rights enshrined in national constitutions and in international conventions and agreements. Unsustainable extraction, harvesting, production and consumption patterns lead to climate change, widespread pollution and environmental destruction, evicting us from our lands and creating immense levels of poverty and disease.

We are deeply concerned that the activities of multinational mining corporations on Indigenous lands have led to the loss and desecration of our lands, as exemplified here on Khoi-San territory. These activities have caused immense health problems, interfered with access to, and occupation of our sacred sites, destroyed and depleted Mother Earth, and undermined our cultures.

We are responsible for defending Indigenous lands and communities against exploitation by governments, development agencies, private enterprise, NGOs and individuals. Indigenous Peoples are not objects of tourism development. We are active participants with rights and responsibilities to our territories, including the process of planning, implementation, and the evaluation of tourism.

Recognizing the vital role that pastoralism and hunting-gathering play in the livelihoods of many Indigenous Peoples, we urge governments to recognize, accept, support and invest in pastoralism and hunting-gathering as viable and sustainable economic systems.

continued

THE KIMBERLEY DECLARATION *continued*

We reaffirm the rights of our peoples, nations, and communities, our women, men, elders and youth to physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being.

We are determined to ensure the equal participation of all Indigenous Peoples throughout the world in all aspects of planning for a sustainable future with the inclusion of women, men, elders and youth. Equal access to resources is required to achieve this participation.

We urge the United Nations to promote respect for the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded between Indigenous Peoples and States, or their successors, according to their original spirit and intent, and to have States honor and respect such treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.

Language is the voice of our ancestors from the beginning of time. The preservation, securing and development of our languages is a matter of extreme urgency. Language is part of the soul of our nations, our being and the pathway to the future.

We are willing to enter into partnerships with international agencies, governments, private sector and corporations in order to achieve human and environmental sustainability,

provided that the partnership are established according to the following principles: honesty, openness and good faith; free, prior and informed consent of the people affected; respect and recognition of our cultures, languages and spiritual beliefs; and our rights to land and self-determination.

We welcome the establishment of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issue and urge the UN to secure all the necessary political, institutional and financial support so that it can function effectively according to its mandate as contained in ECOSOC Resolution E/2000/22. We support the continuation of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations based on the importance of its mandate to set international standards on the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We call for a World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Development as a culmination of the United Nations International Decade for the World's Indigenous Peoples (1995-2004) and as a concrete follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

We continue to meet in the spirit of unity inspired by the Khoi-San people and their hospitality. We reaffirm our mutual solidarity as Indigenous Peoples of the world in our struggle for social and environmental justice.

ACTIVITIES AT THE SACRED PLACE August 27 – September 4, 2002

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27TH

10am – meditation
3-4pm – Biodanza – Dance of Life & Vitality
5-8pm – Sacred Place Opening and Reception

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28TH

10am – meditation Sufi prayer & devotional music
12noon – Tranquility Zone – Bahai's
2pm – Tranquility Zone – Bahai's
5pm – Tranquility Zone – Bahai's
5:30-8:30pm – Kamla Chowdhry: Poverty and Spirituality
7pm – Tranquility Zone – Bahai's

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29

1:30-6pm – UNEP – Civil Society Roundtable on Biodiversity, Cultural Diversity, Ethics and the Environment.
4pm – Spiritual and Emotional Sustainability on Earth
6pm – Mayan Fire Ceremony with Mayan Spiritual Leaders Mercedes and Gerardo Barrios

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30TH

10am – meditation – Patrick Petit – World Peace Prayer Society & Goya
11am-1pm – Spiritual World Vision Discussion Workshop by Axel Rubin
1-4pm – Water Ceremony with Indigenous Women
5-6:30pm – Earth Charter & Ark of Hope

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31ST

10am – International Presentation Meditation
Angela Cameron, Sister Josephine
11:30am – Franciscans Celebration of Creation
3-5pm – Human Rights Reading.
Charmaine Crockett and PDHRE
4-6pm – Earth Values Caucus Sacred Reading –
Martha Gallahue

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

10am – meditation – Art of Living
12noon – The Mighty Voice Choir
3-5pm – Interdependence Day Ceremony and Launching,
We the World. Lead by Angaangaq Liberth, Mercedes and Gerardo Barrios, Diane Williams.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

10-12noon – Healing Circle for the Earth (NASREC)
2pm – Chris Tokalon – Talk & Practical Demonstration on Overtone Singing & Sound Healing
5-7pm – Celebration of Hope

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Brahma Kumaris morning meditation

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

morning meditation

A SACRED PLACE

AT THE WORLD SUMMIT
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
August 26 – September 4, 2002

Photographs by Roberto Mucaro Borrero and Pamela Kraft



Francis Sakuda (left) and Koimarish Ole Mulo (Maasai)



Indigenous women's Water Ceremony (above and below)

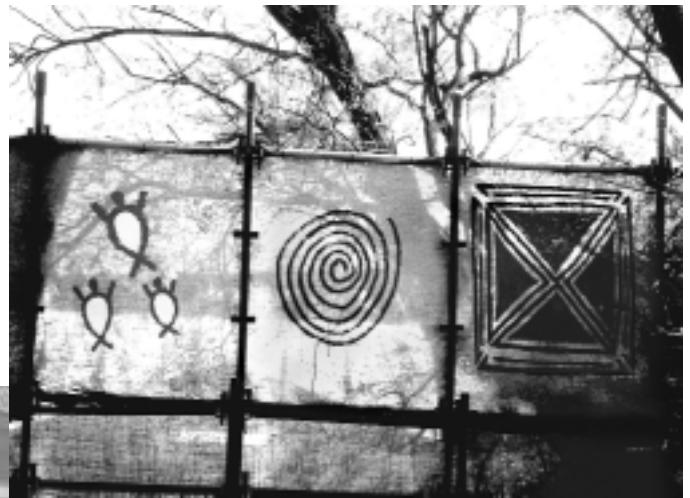


Performance at Ubuntu Village

A SACRED PLACE

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Photographs by Roberto Mucaro Borrero and Pamela Kraft



Symbols wall at A Sacred Place



Tribal Link coordinating team (clockwise from left):
Pamela Kraft, Executive Director, Diane Williams, UN
Representative, Tribal Link Fdn., Roberto Mucaro Borrero,
Chair, UN NGO Committee on the International Decade of
the World's Indigenous Peoples; Brian Keane, Land as Life.



Healing Circle
for the Earth