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CENTRO DE RECURSOS JURÍDICOS PARA LOS PUEBLOS INDÍGENAS

602 North Ewing Street • Helena, Montana 59601 • (406) 449-2006 • Email: mt@indianlaw.org
WASHINGTON OFFICE: 601 E Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 • (202) 547-2800 • Email: dcoffice@indianlaw.org

Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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We are grateful for the Report and recommendations of the Expert Mechanism, especially for the attention it gives to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

We want to offer just a few comments on the Report. First, the Expert Mechanism has suggested that the Council adopt the themes identified in the Alta Outcome Document as the themes for the World Conference. This suggestion is acceptable provided that these themes are interpreted broadly so as not to limit discussions or limit the actions to be taken in the outcome document. We would like to ask whether the Expert Mechanism interprets the themes in a way that would not exclude the action recommendations that have been referred to in this session.

The Report also recommends that the Alta document be considered in drafting the outcome document for the World Conference. The Alta document should be considered, but not as the exclusive voice of indigenous peoples. All other recommendations and submissions from indigenous peoples must be considered as well, especially submissions from indigenous governments. The goal of full and effective participation by indigenous peoples, which has been embraced by practically all speakers in this session, demands that all genuine representatives of indigenous governments and peoples be permitted to participate and have their ideas considered – not just those groups that participated in the Alta process.

For example, a large group of more than 70 indigenous governments that did not participate in the Alta process has submitted three major action recommendations for the Conference. These indigenous nations, including my own, recommend that a strong implementing and monitoring body be created for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; that specific actions be taken to combat violence against indigenous women; and that a new status be created for indigenous governments to participate in United Nations meetings on a permanent basis. No doubt other indigenous peoples may make significant recommendations that should be considered as well.

We especially support the Expert Mechanism's recommendation that the World Conference be inclusive and open to full participation by all legitimate representatives of indigenous peoples, especially genuine indigenous governments. The Chair of the Expert Mechanism commented in the session yesterday that this includes indigenous governments and peoples that were not a part of the Alta process.

Thank you.