

## **Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network (IWBN)**

Opening Statement

Montreal, Canada, 8 October 2007

We, the Indigenous women from Africa, Asia, Arctic, North and Latin America, Pacific and Russia have gathered and worked together as the Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network with the guidance of our ancestors here upon the traditional territory of the Mohawk people.

First of all, we celebrate the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and its guiding principles which constitute the recognition by the world community of the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of indigenous peoples.

We reaffirm that Indigenous women are the owners, guardians and transmitters of traditional knowledge from generation to generation, which has ensured its vitality, permanency, sustainability and development. We request the respect, recognition and the protection of our traditional knowledge, as well as our active, full and effective participation in the processes related to these rights. It should also be taken into account that the specific traditional knowledge of Indigenous women is sacred, indivisible, inalienable, and an integral part to the education and well-being of indigenous families and communities.

Indigenous women declare that without the recognition of our rights, especially the right to free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples there can be no access to our genetic resources or our traditional knowledge. We remind Parties of the Provisions of Article 31 of the Declaration, which should be used as the guiding principles.

The IWBN will follow closely and actively participate in all deliberations of this meeting as a part of our responsibility as daughters of Mother Earth. We request that the Parties take into account our proposals.

Declaración de Montreal de la Red de Mujeres Indígenas sobre Biodiversidad (RMIB)

Montreal, Canadá, 08 de 2007