

**UNDP/RBLAC & APIKAN INDIGENOUS NETWORK**

**INDIGENOUS TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT ROUND TABLE**

Oct. 11, 1994 - InterAmerican Development Bank, Washington, DC

**REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS**

**AND**

**FOLLOW UP RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

On Oct. 11, 1994 the United Nations Development Program and the Apikan Indigenous Network co-sponsored a Round Table on Indigenous Trade and Development. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together stakeholders to discuss policies, opportunities, constraints and issues related to Indigenous trade and development in the Americas. The meeting is part of a series of meetings and activities leading up to a regional workshop to be held in South America in March. Related activities include a UNDP/APIKAN scoping mission to Central America and over 10 national Indigenous peoples development meetings being prepared for various countries in the Americas.

The Round Table discussion focused on the potential and opportunities for Indigenous Peoples development and empowerment through Indigenous to Indigenous partnerships and strengthening and expanding fair trade links with the private sector.

This discussion, held at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, DC, brought together Indigenous leaders, Indigenous producer organizations, FairTrade organizations, Financial institutions, Development agencies, NGOs, various government agencies. In all, 49 persons were in attendance, representing some 30 organizations.

This report, will briefly highlight the nature of the discussion, recommendations and follow-up actions taken.

## **OPENING REMARKS**

### **INTERAMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK**

The conference was opened by Waldemar Wirsig, Manager, Social Programmes, Sustainable Development Department, Inter-American Development Bank. In his opening remarks he noted that IDB's replenishment calls for increased focus on Indigenous peoples, and that "Indigenous peoples need to develop technical and institutional capacity . . . success depends upon establishing networks."

### **UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

Fernando Zumbado, UNDP Regional Director of the Regional Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean, outlined initiatives they are taking to support Indigenous peoples. "In commemoration of the United Nations International Decade for Indigenous Peoples, the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean has embarked upon a new Indigenous Peoples Development Initiative. This initiative seeks to stimulate a process of collaboration between UNDP and Indigenous communities and organizations, open to the participation of other bilateral and multilateral agencies, and local and international NGOs, to identify and develop, at the country level, concrete operational activities to address the development problems faced by Indigenous peoples . . . (this) initiative strives to address the particular need of Indigenous communities in the region, as

defined by Indigenous communities themselves.” He stressed that, “understanding and feeling solidarity with the struggles and successes of Indigenous peoples in the Americas is key to fashioning a revised, successful, and fair Latin American and Caribbean process of development.” He cited a comment from an Aboriginal woman from Australia that recently caught his attention, ‘If you came only to help me, then you can go home, But, if you consider my struggle part of your own survival, then perhaps we can work together.’ Zumbado noted the UNDP currently has over 50 projects supporting Indigenous peoples development, with resources of over \$100 million and how “the enormous potential for expanding Indigenous trade, joint venture opportunities and investment in Indigenous enterprise was proven by the recent UNDP/APIKAN fact-finding mission in Central America”.

### **APIKAN INDIGENOUS NETWORK**

The opening presentation by Simon Brascoupé, President of Apikan Indigenous Network outlined Apikan’s recent activities to support International Indigenous trade and development, as well as a short historical background on Indigenous trade. Apikan has played a lead role in fostering Indigenous partnerships with a focus on trade and development. Apikan has organized several conferences with themes related to Indigenous partnerships and trade and development. Most recently Apikan, the UNDP and UNDP/PRODERE sponsored an Indigenous Partnerships for Self Sufficiency scoping mission to Central America. The scoping mission met with 57 Indigenous organizations and identified over 35 development opportunities<sup>1</sup>. Apikan has also facilitated a number of Indigenous partnerships, such as the Canadian Inuit - Nicaraguan Miskito fisheries project which will be discussed later.

Brascoupé, an Algonquin-Mohawk from Canada, explained the historical role trade played in Indigenous life. In pre contact times huge trading barges plied the Caribbean coast, seeds, food products and tools were traded extensively amongst many groups; trade language allowed communication between linguistically distinct groups and established trade routes linked many areas throughout the Americas.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

The Round Table discussion featured presentations on Private Sector & Fair Trade, Indigenous Development Success Stories and Indigenous Partnership Opportunities, followed by a round table discussion involving supporting institutions.

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<sup>1</sup>The scoping mission is reported on in more detail later in the report

## **FAIRTRADE**

The potential of Fair Trade to provide Indigenous producers with fair value for labour and other inputs, was discussed by a number of presenters. Fair Trade associations, which exist in various countries in Europe, North America and Asia, provide a mechanism whereby products are identified as organic, ecologically sound products, and having been produced by fairly compensated third world producers. These products are marketed as FairTrade products by retailers, who have found that consumers are willing to pay a premium for products that provide fair benefits to third world producers. According to Dan Salcedo, President of Pueblo to People this amounts to a \$200-400 million annual market for third world products.

Reginaldo Haslett-Marroquin, a Guatemalan Aboriginal who manages ENLACE Guatemala, a FairTrade organization based in Guatemala and the US, outlined their experience. Reginaldo, who is also a Director of the North American Fair Trade Federation, discussed how ENLACE was initiated by family level efforts in the Guatemalan highlands and how it has expanded to the community and regional level and today has offices in Minnesota, Texas and Guatemala, and provides North American consumers an opportunity to purchase fair trade products (gourmet coffee and handi-crafts).

Marroquin explained problems with outside initiated and managed projects, and credited the success of ENLACE to the fact that it was created and managed by Indigenous peoples themselves.

CAMECO, a Canadian Mining and Energy Company, provided a statement outlining their successful experience in working with Indigenous peoples in Canada. In the statement they said, "We need to develop and nurture our strategic alliances with northern (Indigenous) people in order to protect our long term interests, and theirs . . . We were forced to facilitate the integration of Aboriginals into our mining operations as a condition of a surface lease in the early 1980's. What began as a legal requirement has now become a corporate mission. . . Our commitment to Indigenous people in Canada, is now helping us realize some exciting international opportunities. We have recently signed an agreement with the Republic of Kyrgyzstan (a former Soviet Republic) to develop one of the world's largest gold deposits." CAMECO credits their experience and track record with Indigenous peoples in Canada as being crucial to their securing this contract.

Other FairTrade presenters including Dan Salcedo, President, Pueblo to People, Candi Smucker, Self Help Crafts and Chris Thomas, Fair Trade Federation, echoed Enlace's comments and stressed the importance of the Round Table and the need to provide institutional support for Indigenous Trade and Development.

## **INDIGENOUS SUCCESS STORIES**

Blandina Makkik, an Inuit woman from Canada, spoke of the Canadian Inuit experience; how Inuit have went from a nomadic existence in Canada's Arctic to settling several of the Worlds largest land claims and how Inuit now own a variety of businesses ranging from 1-2 person operations to airlines, oil companies, off shore fishing, international consulting, transportation, tourism, real estate development, etc., all the while maintaining a strong sense of their cultural identity. Makkik, explained that, while the Inuit do not pretend to have all the answers, they are willing to share their experience and knowledge with other Indigenous groups, "We are not the same-same, but as Indigenous people we share common problems."

The Asociación Chajulense, a successful Guatemalan Aboriginal development organization representing 48 communities in the highlands of Guatemala, outlined their successful history with presentations by Indigenous leader Arcadio Daniel Galindo, Father Rosolino Bianchetti and Rafail Toledo Posadas from UNDP/PRODERE Guatemala. They explained how, beginning in 1988, over the ashes of the Cooperative Union Ixil which was destroyed by the civil war, the Asociación Chajulense now represents 15 000 people and has a host of development successes. They are active in Social Areas, Agro-Ecology, Environment, Professional Training and Crafts, and Credit. The 1,700 coffee growers in the Association have produced nearly 500,000 kgs of FairTrade coffee per year for the past two years. Nearly 300 women associates make close to 40 different high quality textile products which are exported directly to FairTrade markets in Europe.

In their presentation, the Asociación Chajulense stressed the need for the multi-lateral institutions to work directly with the Indigenous producers, and not always through the nation state governments.

Various other success stories from throughout the Americas were presented including the work of the South American Jalquas organization which was presented by Hugo Navajas from Bolivia.

## **INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Various presenters detailed opportunities for Indigenous to Indigenous development and trade partnerships.

Several Indigenous leaders from Nicaragua stressed the desire of the Indigenous residents of the Atlantic region to become more involved in development. The presenters (Brooklyn Rivera, Minister Atlantic Region in Nicaraguan national government, Mirna Cunningham, Member of the Nicaraguan National Assembly, Samuel Mercado, Miskito development worker and UNDP Indigenous focal point, Robert Grosse) all spoke about development and production opportunities, and the desire of local Indigenous peoples to participate in the development process. There was consensus on the need to prepare a sustainable economic development strategy for the Atlantic coast region in order to maximize benefits to the local Indigenous population<sup>2</sup>. Brooklyn Rivera urged the international institutions to begin working directly with

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<sup>2</sup>A Development Corporation has since been organized by the Indigenous peoples in the region to serve as a vehicle to empower them to play a greater role in the development process

Indigenous peoples and local governments and organizations. Mirna Cunningham noted that historical models of development have failed Indigenous peoples. Robert Grosse explained the successes the PRORAAS program has had working at the grassroots level.

Samuel Mercado, a Nicaraguan Indigenous leader, echoed the need for a sustainable development strategy. He went on to discuss the work of the Miskito NGO, Pana Pana, and how it is helping the Indigenous population of the Atlantic region of Nicaragua to rebuild. He showed a number of slides that illustrated the stone age conditions of many areas in the region.

Kevin Knight, representing Unaaq Inc. and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, reported on several Inuit initiatives. He outlined an approach that included institutional development and trade development. He explained how the Canadian Inuit are working to develop projects in several areas including Belize and Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan project involves a joint effort with the Miskito of the Atlantic coast to develop the local fishery and maximize benefits to the local population. Knight went on to explain how the Inuit experience in fishery and institutional development in the Canadian Arctic was relevant to the Nicaraguan opportunity.

The UNDP/Apikan Scoping Mission to Central America was reported on by mission leader, Wayne Dunn of the Apikan Indigenous Network. He explained how the mission traveled to El Salvador, Belize, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Panama, meeting with Indigenous leaders, organizations and communities, and development professionals. The purpose of the mission was to determine if Central American Indigenous groups were interested in working with North American Indigenous groups on trade and development projects and to determine potential opportunities for partnerships. After meeting with 194 individuals representing 78 organizations (57 Indigenous) the response was unanimously positive, with over 35 Indigenous project opportunities identified.

Dunn explained how enthusiastically his mission was received and outlined several comments that had been made by local Indigenous persons; "It is easier to get land for baboons to live on than it is to get land for people to live and work on"<sup>3</sup>; "No income equals no peace, Peace is achieved through reorienting people with income opportunities. Economic action, not simply forgiveness will achieve lasting peace. Your focus on trade is essential"<sup>4</sup>; "We need to focus on trade and economic issues as a priority in our development process. We welcome the support and experience of our North American cousins."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>David Magaña, Mayan Leader, Belize

<sup>4</sup>Miguel Angel Balcarcel, Guatemalan Peace Project

<sup>5</sup>Alfonso Smith Worman, President, Indigenous Parliament of the Americas

Dunn went on to outline how virtually every group he met with identified a lack of access to financial and human resources as a major constraint to development. Dunn's preliminary report on the mission, which was tabled at the Round Table, recommended that, **"A concentrated effort be made by all stakeholders to assemble the financial and human resources necessary to assist with the development of sustainable Indigenous trade initiatives."**

Gary Peters, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres and an associate on the scoping mission, discussed the potential for a craft importing and wholesale joint venture between Guatemalan and Canadian Indigenous interests. He outlined the potential for such an enterprise and explained the nature of benefits that would flow to both parties.

Additional presentations were made by Emilio Sequén, an Aboriginal Director of the Indigenous Development Fund in Guatemala, Diego Iturralde of the Indigenous Peoples Fund in Bolivia and Ed Hall, a North American Indian leader representing the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

## **ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS**

A closing discussion featured presentations by; Apikan Indigenous Network, Smithsonian Institution, InterAmerican Development Bank, UNDP, the Inter American Foundation & the World Bank. The discussion focused on the policies and activities of the institutions in relation to Indigenous trade and development.

## **FOLLOW UP COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **COMMENTS**

Participants urged the institutions present and the event organizers to continue to press for improvements in the ways in which multi-lateral institutions and NGOs dealt with Indigenous trade. There were a number of strong statements aimed at ensuring timely and targeted follow-up to the Round Table.

Many participants provided written feedback to the event organizers. Highlights of these follow;

Round Table participants gave a "very strong statement of cooperation" and the clear understanding of the need for a development approach that focuses on Indigenous trade and respects Indigenous peoples. "(I)n Guatemala, one of the main sources of (Indigenous) success is . . . ownership of the projects by the communities themselves."<sup>6</sup>

"(It's) time for (Multi Lateral) institutions to start . . . supporting local initiatives (and) Indigenous people who are developing themselves . . . Indigenous peoples around the world have always, since they were invaded by foreign countries, worked to create

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<sup>6</sup>ENLACE Guatemala

wealth for the elites. This has created resistance to outside managed or initiated development projects.”<sup>7</sup>

“We need to establish a working group to follow up on this Round Table so we don’t lose our momentum”<sup>8</sup>

“We think that the seriousness of the institutions that participated at the (Round Table), and the clear statements about partnerships and cooperation programs to be developed, are strong statements that we are getting to the point where true and sustainable economic development can start . . . Direct action has to be taken immediately, the experiences shared and all the ideas have to be systematized, analyzed, budgeted and financed in order to bring into practice, evaluate them objectively and compare with other similar projects . . . We see the (Round Table) as the beginning of a process, where financial and development institutions start to base their programs and policies on suggestions from people who are affected by them. . . The national meetings and the (regional) meeting planned for early next year will be crucial to determine the real results of the this dialogue and strategic development process.” (This meeting provides a starting point and needs to be combined with other initiatives to generate profitable and sustainable initiatives)”<sup>9</sup>

The Inuit Circumpolar Conference and Unaaq International have developed an approach based on the considerable experience of the Inuit in the areas of institutional and economic development which recognizes the importance of integrating women, environment, culture and traditional knowledge in development activities taking place in Indigenous communities.<sup>10</sup>

## **CHALLENGES**

ENLACE challenged the financial institutions to restructure themselves so development funds can be channeled directly to Indigenous Peoples<sup>11</sup>;

Is the UNDP ready to start dealing directly with Indigenous Peoples to develop policies to be used for future development programs, work with Indigenous peoples’ organizations and bring together different governments willing to finance Indigenous programs. We need an alternative development fund that can support Indigenous development. We also need to secure resources to support networking activities such as the Round Table.<sup>12</sup>

It’s not enough to just share trade and organizing skills. It is necessary to educate governments and agencies on how to work with Indigenous peoples.<sup>13</sup>

The Six Nations International Development Agency reminded the institutions that it is time to recognize the existence of talented Indigenous organizations and peoples who can propose, design, implement and manage their own trade and development projects.

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<sup>7</sup>ENLACE Guatemala

<sup>8</sup>Mirna Cunningham-Nicaragua

<sup>9</sup>ENLACE Guatemala

<sup>10</sup>ICC/Unaaq submission to UNDP

<sup>11</sup>This echoes comments made at the Round Table by Brooklyn Rivera, Minister Atlantic Region, National Govt. of Nicaragua

<sup>12</sup>ENLACE Guatemala

<sup>13</sup>Ed Hall - BIA-USA

All international institutions, including the UNDP, should facilitate and ensure a real democratic dialogue among Indian peoples and development agencies, particularly within emerging structures that may gain access of and influence over the designation of funds. We, as Indigenous professional people, have the skills and knowledge to transmit and transform concepts into actions because our goal is to work directly between Indian communities north and south, without intermediaries. I hope you (UNDP) can be a partner in this process.

### **ACTIONS TAKEN**

In response to the discussion at the Round Table and to follow up recommendations made by participants and other Indigenous groups from the developing world, the UNDP has worked with Apikan and other Indigenous and government interests to initiate a number of actions.

1. As requested by numerous Indigenous organizations from throughout the Americas, the UNDP, with assistance from Apikan Indigenous Network, has prepared a draft document to establish a Facility to support Biodiversity and Indigenous Peoples Development. This facility, which will include a trust fund, was recommended by many Indigenous groups and by the Apikan/UNDP Scoping Mission, and has received enthusiastic support from many Indigenous organizations. The UNDP and Apikan are leading a multi group effort to finance this initiative.
2. Additional follow up actions include more than 10 national seminars on Indigenous development being organized by the UNDP in countries throughout the Latin American and Caribbean region. These seminars and other activities will lead to a regional workshop planned for Paraguay in March 1995.
3. The UNDP is also working with the Italian government to organize a European Round Table on Indigenous Trade and Development in Italy in early February 1995. This event will bring together western Indigenous leaders and government and business representatives from throughout Europe to discuss issues and opportunities related to Indigenous trade and development.
4. Work is also ongoing to establish a unit with UNDP/RBLAC to follow up on and support activities related to Indigenous peoples and development.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information on the Round Table, its participants and presentations, and on the follow-up activities can be obtained from

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