

URGENT APPEAL BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FOR GREATER ACCESS TO FUNDING

** This letter was drafted by Damon Corrie of Barbados at the request of Chief Pierre Andrews of Pakuri Arawak Territory in Guyana, and submitted in person by Damon Corrie (member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues) at UN headquarters in New York; on Friday May 2nd 2008.*



Damon at UN

Mr. Johan Scholvinck
Director
UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Social Policy and Development
United Nations Headquarters
New York

April 21st 2008

Dear Sir,

One of the main problems hindering the economic and social development of the majority of Indigenous Peoples of the Latin America & Caribbean Region - is access to financing.

We Indigenous Peoples cannot use our lands as collateral to obtain loans, which is a normal procedure at commercial lending agencies; and this automatically puts Indigenous Peoples at a disadvantage when trying to access funding to develop our communities.

Whilst we Indigenous Peoples do not want to risk losing our collectively owned lands in order to secure funding, we do want to improve our standards of living - as do non-indigenous Peoples the world over.

In accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - Articles 39, 41 and 42 specifically, but also considering articles 3, 5 and 21: A solution therefore, that does not endanger the collectively owned indigenous lands, but does provide Indigenous Peoples governmental bodies access to funding under a specific 'Indigenous oriented' set of application and eligibility guidelines - preferably from a UN or UN affiliated agency directly, and not via a national government 'third party' entity; would remove our concern of potential discrimination becoming a mitigating factor in the process.

We therefore appeal to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social affairs, to work through it's specialized agencies to redress this glaring imbalance and full fill it's mandate to allow Indigenous Peoples the opportunity to improve our standards of living in this twenty-first century.

Damon Gerard Corrie
Member of the Caribbean Indigenous Caucus
At the Seventh Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
United Nations Headquarters
New York