

Our Responsibility to The Seventh Generation

Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Development

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Preface

We cannot simply think of our survival; each new generation is responsible to ensure the survival of the seventh generation...Indigenous people are the poorest of the poor and the holders of the key to the future survival of humanity.

-- authors of Our Responsibility to the Seventh Generation, 1992

The sidebar [comment above], drawn from the text of this report, captures the paradoxical situation of Indigenous people around the earth: on the one hand, policies and institutions have pushed them to the fringe of society and economy: on the other hand, the world is coming to understand their feeling that the current development path is not sound and that the survival of humanity is at stake. The voices of Indigenous people strike a resounding note, since their appeal is rooted in a deep and long time relationship to the earth.

IISD believes that their message reinforces a fundamental value of sustainable development. Their call for ensuring responsibility to the seventh generation and for restoring the balance between the different elements of life on earth relates directly to the principles of fairness and equity. It emphasizes the need for environmental stewardship and the requirement of linking the economy, the environment and the well being of people within decision-making.

The Institute tries to be a catalyst, incorporating views of stakeholders from many different backgrounds into decision-making about sustainable development. To do so requires a dedicated effort to listen and learn from communities and people who are shaping their own philosophies and initiatives for sustainable development. In particular we wish to highlight initiatives which otherwise might not be captured adequately or disseminated widely. Our role is to facilitate and to report as directly as possible their message, not to filter it through mainstream perspectives. This report, therefore contains the viewpoint of the authors.

This report presents the vision of sustainable development through the eyes and experience of Indigenous people. It displays the suffering and pain caused by the cumulative effect of colonial policies, shortsighted development patterns and denial of Indigenous value and lifestyles; the lessons of such traumatic experience should lead decision-makers to rethink their approaches toward a sustainable society.

Indigenous people invite us all to understand the root causes of past and present problems and to take an active role in the healing process. They also define what should be a caring social organization based on the principles of collective ownership and sharing, mutual respect and helping within the extended family system and community, the acceptance of diversity, and collective responsibility for the well-being of all members of society, of future generations and for the maintenance of all parts of Creation. This approach calls for orienting much of our attention to the needs of women and youth.

The Institute is pleased to have cooperated with Indigenous peoples and organizations within and outside of Canada in the conduct of this work. We hope to maintain a reciprocal and equal working partnership where varied kinds of knowledge, different world views and sustainable

development practices will enrich our understanding of what is necessary to create a sustainable future.

Arthur J. Hanson
President & CEO
International Institute for Sustainable Development

Introduction

Background

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) was established, with the support of the governments of Canada and Manitoba, to help promote the concept of sustainable development set out in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission). The Commission defined sustainable development as that which development “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

In pursuit of its goal, IISD undertakes several programs, one of which is to find means to eradicate poverty and reduce the processes of impoverishment through the application of sustainable development principles and strategies at global, national and local levels.

IISD’s program of work on this theme has a two-pronged approach. It will research and help implement sustainable development policies and practices which address the root issues of impoverishment in relation to the Institute’s endeavours on trade, corporate management, national budgets and new institutions. The program will also provide understanding of perspectives of the poor and their coping strategies through a “listen and learn” process, and communication of the results to wider societies and decision-makers.

On the policy research side of the program, IISD has begun work on building a framework linking processes of impoverishment and sustainable development, and identification of a research agenda linking processes of impoverishment to selected aspects of IISD’s other research theme areas.

Through the “listen and learn” process, IISD will focus on an emerging issue of key importance: the demand for local control over the well-being of current and future generations, and an effective voice in decisions which affect the lives of people in local communities. The Institute is initially building this thrust around the efforts of Indigenous people in Canada and other parts of the world, in order to gain a comparative understanding of how various types of local communities go through the same processes of addressing poverty and evolving strategies to prevent further impoverishment and support sustainable development. The initial output from this thrust appears in this report which provides a voice to Indigenous people to express their perspectives on impoverishment and sustainable development.

IISD sees its role in this program area as providing better understanding about the processes of

impoverishment, sustainable development policy options and practices to prevent further impoverishment, and linking community level approaches to broader institutions; as a catalyst for institutional reform in support of sustainable development that will benefit poor people and prevent impoverishment; as an intermediary between grassroots knowledge and decision-making processes; and as an information broker on community-based sustainable development. It will also work to provide knowledge to certain community groups and support their capacity to build change toward sustainable development, and to foster dialogue and collaboration between these groups and policy makers.

Objectives and Scope

The report highlights the value of Indigenous knowledge and contributions to sustainable development as a genuine perspective and practice to foster in regard to public policies and other decision-making affecting Indigenous people. A key characteristic of the report is to bring forward the voice and perspective of Indigenous people involved in IISD's listen and learn process, rather than trying to integrate IISD's views.

The specific objectives of the work include:

- ▶ reviewing the interconnected components ensuring Indigenous sustainable development and interpreting how Indigenous people consider issues of sustainable development;
- ▶ addressing the various processes of impoverishment of Indigenous people, which threaten their sustainable development base;
- ▶ focusing on the well-being of current and future generations of Indigenous people, as a major, often overlooked, concern for sustainable development;
- ▶ pinpointing guiding principles for public policies and corporate behaviour which will foster sustainable society and sustainable development for Indigenous people.

The report represents the first stage of a pioneering effort that endeavours to explain Indigenous peoples' perspective on the foregoing issues. Because it was written by Indigenous people from Canada, it drew largely on North American experience. To bring a wider perspective to the project, contributions were solicited from Indigenous people in Meldco and India and have been included as sidebars in several parts of the document.

The challenge of this report is to provide an understanding to an audience of largely non-Indigenous people that Indigenous people have a particular mode of thought evolved over thousands of years, that is steeped in their own history and traditions and has culminated in perspectives of themselves and their relationship to the earth that is very different from the dominant world view.

Acknowledgements

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We are extremely grateful to Mr. Larry Morrissette, team leader at the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Youth Program, who helped to initiate and has provided tremendous support to this listen and learn process with Indigenous people. Mr. Jaime Luna Martinet, a Zapotec from Oaxaca (Mexico), deserves our special thanks for supporting our initiatives through his writings and through the production of four videos highlighting the endeavours and hopes of Oaxaca's Indigenous People. From India, Mr. Ashok Chaudhari, member of VEDCHHI PRADESH SEWA SAMITI in Valod Dist: Surat (Gujarat) and Arun Kumar, Senior Fellow at the School of Desert Sciences in Jodhpur (Rajasthan) provided us with enlightening case studies about the wisdom of traditional knowledge and technologies, the spirit of self-reliant Indigenous villages and the impacts of development schemes and modernization upon Indigenous people. Being part of this listen and learn process, they remain close to our heart.

We are equally grateful to Ms. Judy Williamson and Wilfred Buck, both Indigenous people from Manitoba with experience and knowledge in the area of culture in relation to Indigenous youth and women, and Mr. Agustin Olivera Estudillo, a Zapotec from Oaxaca (Mexico), who is advisor to the State Coordination of Small Coffee Producers of Oaxaca: they kindly reviewed the report and helped to present it to various audiences in Rio de Janeiro. Thanks are also due to Mr. David Blacksmith from the Cree Nation" (Winnipeg), who created the beautiful and inspiring design of the cover page representing the Sacred Circle of Life linking Indigenous people to other living beings on Turtle Island. Milton Born-With-A-Tooth, Ellen Gabriel, Bill Mussell and Mary Williams are thanked for their contribution to understanding the processes of impoverishment and sustainable development from an Indigenous perspective.

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Notes about the Authors

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Overview

The body of the report consists of six chapters. It begins by pinpointing the barrier's to understanding an Indigenous perspective, the most difficult being our ethnocentric view of the world. These barriers also relate to our ability to enter social encounters with relative ease. Indigenous people have been forced to enter the dominant society's world while at the same time maintaining a foothold in their own. Therefore, the first chapter calls the wider society to make real efforts to escape the prison of its own world view.

The second chapter enters into an explanation of Indigenous perspective and relationship with the environment. While this perspective is rooted in the experience of Indigenous people from Canada and relates mainly to such a context and history, it recognizes the commonality of the colonial relationship and cultural roots with Indigenous people from other parts of the world. The report states that the Indigenous perspective draws its roots from an intimate awareness of tire symbiotic relationship to the earth, based upon a delicate balance between its living parts. The original law passed down from their ancestors crystallizes the sacred responsibility of Indigenous people to be the caretaker of all that is on Mother Earth and therefore that each generation is responsible to ensure the survival for the seventh generation. This basic law that was the driving force behind the development of Indigenous culture became reflected in the institutions and systems of Indigenous people: the extended family systems, the clan system, decision-making through consensus, division of labour respecting the respective roles of the clans and based upon need, survival and family structure all contribute to sharing, social cohesion and respect for life. Respect for people and for the earth is linked together in order for people to survive and care for future generations. The second chapter ends by stating the contrasting views on the relationship to the earth between Indigenous people and the dominant perspective. These contrasting perceptions relate to the sacred vs. secular nature of the relationship to the earth, the collective vs. individual responsibility in that relationship, the way we consider the life of the planet as a gift of the Creator or resources to be used, the vision of our existence as it relates to sustainability, the reasons for utilizing the organic matter of the earth viewed as a sacred circle of life or as linear growth for human satisfaction.

Chapter 3 provides an understanding of the processes of impoverishment with respect to the disruption of traditional economies, integration into the global economy, modernization, environmental and social degradation due to disruptive development schemes, and marginalization of women and youth. The chapter explains the reasons for and the impact of the introduction of production for exchange in traditional economies based on sharing and production for use, as well as the pressure to continue subsistence food production along with the shifting to cash crops. Indigenous people have been further dispossessed and marginalized from their land base, as a result of the relationship of dependence created over the period of fur trade and by government policies. The use of alcohol, the introduction of credit and welfare economy created further dependence on traders and outside interveners, with the result of breaking down family networks and shared responsibility for the community and the land. This chapter also

pinpoints that Indigenous people's economies were producing commodities for the global market from the first contact with European traders, and through a worldwide system of mercantile trading companies. An analysis based upon the loss of the economic surplus and lack of capital formation also gives an understanding of the impact of this early integration of Indigenous economies into the world economy. Parallel to that integration, the report explains the reason for absorbing Indigenous people into the mainstream society. The analysis is focused on the role of state policies toward the modernization of the Indigenous economy through treaties and creation of reserves, the modernization of traditional political institutions, and the modernization of the social structure and Indigenous personality. These factors sever Indigenous people from their sacred beliefs, resulting in a devaluation of their knowledge and practices through residential schools and missionaries, artificial legal distinctions, and incentives to assimilate consumerist and individualist values.

Chapter 3 also exposes the reasons why Indigenous peoples have been socially and environmentally destroyed by development schemes, the latest threats being large water development projects and toxic waste disposal sites. The marginalization of Indigenous women and youth is also highlighted in that chapter; the status of Indigenous women has been dramatically altered as a result of assimilating education, government policies, introduction of production for exchange and loss of traditional lands, and as a consequence of the marginalization as Indigenous communities and men. Their knowledge, political influence, role of producer and caretaker have been systematically devaluated, with the consequence that they have nowadays to fight against both the wider society, and the male-dominated political structures for their survival. The report summarizes those processes of impoverishment by stating that colonialism, the early integration into the global economic system, and the ongoing application of inappropriate development strategies have eroded the strength of traditional societies and radically transformed the Indigenous way of life.

Chapter 4's essential message in regard to the well being of people is the need for Indigenous and non-Indigenous to understand why social conflicts and processes of impoverishment occurred and still exist today and, to take an active role in the healing process. Rather than adopting mainstream values and systems, the report points out the necessity for Indigenous people to create their own mechanisms of change based upon the values, beliefs, and system of their original teachings. Healing will be provided by traditional people who have the teachings and the knowledge of the ceremonies and healing methods of their ancestors. But the report states that existing barriers to exert such healing have to be removed; changes in policies and laws regarding child welfare, justice and health, for example, are needed to be reflective of such Indigenous teachings and knowledge. The report then lays out three modes of healing for re-connecting people to Mother Earth and to other Indigenous people. Healing processes will achieve a balance with all aspects of the earth and a balance of mind, body and spirit. Therefore, the report states that access to land is central to Indigenous health and healing; the connection to land and the relationships and obligations that arise from that connection are the core of Indigenous identity. Indigenous people need permanent land bases for their healing centres. The report goes further to claim access to, and control over a land base, since it represents the basis of traditional economy. This subsistence economy has proven over time to be sustainable both socially and ecologically and to have sustained Indigenous people for many generations. While a land base and traditional harvesting are essential, they must be secured and protected by treaty

guaranteed rights and the right to resource management.

The report also promotes other traditional economic activities through eco-tourism, Indigenous art and crafts, the recourse to traditional knowledge and technologies, convergence economic strategies meeting local demand, and restoration of traditional and alternative trading systems.

Chapter 5 emphasizes the importance of Indigenous cultures, communication and knowledge based on respect for life. First, it points out that Indigenous people's knowledge is local knowledge, adapted to the culture and the ecology of each population and matured over a very long period of time. This knowledge is also in compliance with natural law and is based on a holistic vision of life. But the report mentions as well that such knowledge should be sacred from current threats against its oral tradition base, from its appropriation by others and from the introduction of new technologies and knowledge systems. An important section of this chapter presents what the Indigenous perspective has to offer to the wider society; they show the example of sustainable society and can witness environmental change by having maintained a way of life solidly rooted in the earth. They can demonstrate their survival structures in the face of incredible adversity; they exemplify social organization based on the extended family system and principles of collective ownership and sharing, mutual respect and helping, the acceptance of diversity and collective responsibility for the well-being of all members of society. They point out the necessity of ensuring the survival of future generations to a wider society whose heavy discounting of the future has resulted in a massive degradation of the world.

Chapter 6 is a call to action that forms the guiding principles for change. The major emphasis for participation is focussed on Governments, International Organizations, Development Agencies, Environmentalists, Labor Organizations, Peace and Social Justice Groups. The Indigenous groups for which action is most critical are: the traditional people, youth and women. These groups are seen as having the most to contribute toward the development of sustainable societies, for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike. The call proceeds to outline those areas that are considered significant to the process of building and strengthening sustainability. The protection of the traditional way of life is considered as integral to ensuring the preservation of Indigenous people as a culture and as the signpost to the survival of the planet. The documentation of traditional knowledge is promoted as the guidelines by which the global community can live on the land in an ecologically and socially sustainable way. Loss of this knowledge means loss of our chances for survival. The healing programs of Indigenous people are presented in order to illustrate that it is possible to begin the healing of Indigenous populations using the teachings and the methods of the old ways. It is pointed out that non-Indigenous people benefit from this through the strengthening of the potential to save ourselves from global destruction. Economic self-reliance for Indigenous people is outlined as a prerequisite for the survival of the traditional way of life, since culture and the land are indivisible.

Towards Understanding an Indigenous Perspective

Barriers to Understanding

The most difficult barrier for any of us to cross is our ethnocentric view of the world. This is true simply because we are born into a social world with a culture already intact. We are immediately

constrained by accident of birth to one particular understanding of the world with a common body of knowledge. Customs, norms, beliefs and institutions are already in place. Throughout our socialization, we interact with this social world, testing its boundaries; at some point in time this world solidifies in meaning and becomes our inner world. Not only does it become our inner world, but also the meanings and the expressions of this inner world are so widely shared and accepted that they attain the quality of an "objective" social fact. These are not just the internal boundaries from which we act; they also become the same external boundaries toward which we act. Some of us are able to stretch these boundaries; none of us can totally escape.

An additional barrier relates to our ability to enter social encounters with relative ease. This ability is possible because of our shared meanings. These shared meanings allow us to filter accepted and non-problematic information and to concern ourselves only with new information or those that may present themselves as problematic to our understanding. This selective hearing has become a "socially instinctive" part of existing in an environment that bombards us unceasingly with messages of every shape and form. Out of sheer cognitive survival we have adapted to information overload by selective listening or by simply not listening at all. At the point where we become unable to digest new information, or simply refuse to acknowledge any information that is outside of our meaning system, this becomes a barrier to understanding. Constrained by accident of birth we can further tighten the shackles of our social prisons by excluding the sight and understanding of other realities.

Wherever there is a dominant perspective that is so readily accepted and widely influential that it can unconsciously exclude all other perspectives, the process of real communication and understanding is diminished tremendously. Wherever the dominant perspective intentionally ignores or denies the legitimacy and authenticity of other perspectives, the process of communication and understanding is non-existent. Our experience as Indigenous people indicates that the dominant perspective assumes its perspective to be correct above all others. Because of this, all other perspectives are denied or minimized. Indigenous populations have found themselves in the position of the conquered, the subjugated or the annihilated.

As Indigenous people, we are intimately aware of this occurrence. As a result of subjugation or as a conquered people we have become forcibly aware, living beside and sometimes even within the meaning systems of western thought. The colonial relationship has been forced upon Indigenous people over the past few hundred years. For some, it has led to the destruction of the spirit as they enter the white world and remain there even though they are constantly reminded that they don't really belong to it. For others, it has been a life filled with daily conflict as they precariously balance the values of one world with the values of the other, feeling the constant assault against their spirit. For most, it has meant removing themselves entirely from participation while simultaneously fighting the destructive forces of colonial history and an ethnocentric society that places its culture above all others. Those who embrace western thought, that is, most westerners, have never been forced to enter the world of Indigenous people, participating in their lives and understanding how they operate in their day-to-day life.

The Indigenous people, entering the non-indigenous world while maintaining a foothold in their own, have become aware of the dichotomy that exists between two very different peoples. To us it is clear that we, as a global people, are bent on the destruction of the planet. We know that our

survival depends on respecting the gifts of creation and restoring the balance. We know that this does not appear to be the agenda of the dominant perspective. We know that we have lost sight of the original teachings that bind us to our role and our responsibilities to our Mother the earth. We know that the answers will come from the last sustainable societies of this planet-the Indigenous people. According to the Hau de no sau nee :

The traditional native (Indigenous) people hold the key to the reversal of the processes in western civilization which holds the promise of unimaginable future suffering and destruction. Spiritualism is the highest form of political consciousness. And we, the Native people of the western hemisphere, are among the world's surviving proprietors of that kind of consciousness. We are here to impart that message. (1978)

Given the above, we see that the challenge before this group, and the wider society, is to make real efforts to escape the prisons of our own perspectives, and to begin to understand that we Indigenous people have a particular mode of thought that has developed over thousands of years; it is steeped in our own history and traditions and has culminated in a very different relationship to the earth from the dominant perspective. As Indigenous people, we have observations of the world and our relationship to it that can point toward a sustainable society.

Conversely, the challenge of this report is to provide an understanding of an Indigenous world view of sustainable development to an audience of largely non-indigenous people. To do this, we will attempt to provide glimpses into the Indigenous person's world. We hope that by presenting this report, we have better prepared the reader to understand the significance and the potential contributions of an Indigenous perspective.

Side Bar note: ¹ Indigenous populations have found themselves in the position of the conquered, the subjugated or the annihilated.

² As indigenous people, we have observations of the world and our relationship to it that can point toward a sustainable society.

Indigenous Perspectives and Relationships with the Environment

The Context of an Indigenous Perspective

While we believe that all Indigenous people who have experienced the colonial relationship have much in common and recognize that the roots of our cultures are similar in many significant respects, we cannot presume to speak for all Indigenous people. However, we would not find it surprising if other Indigenous groups were to say their experiences and understandings are much the same! Be that as it may, we will limit this part of the report to our own perspective. This perspective is based upon our experiences and understanding that arise out of our historical relationship with the new settlers. It was developed in the context of the colonial relationship that existed in our territories, commonly referred to as the Hudson Bay drainage basin. Our framework for interpretation will be drawn from the teachings of our Elders and the practices

they have given us; these pre-date the arrival of the visitors and form the very foundation of our perspectives.

Currently accepted ethnocentric theories, arising from western thought on the development of societies from the primitive to the civilized, are not necessarily accepted by Indigenous people. Rather, it is obvious to us that it is much easier to justify exploitation and subjugation of people if you convince yourself that you are helping to remove them from their "harsh and brutal life."

It would be pure conjecture to think about what would have transpired if Christopher Columbus had not become lost; it is not conjecture that many of our people are living by the same principles and standards that were set thousands of years ago and that our current perspective does not deviate substantially from the original teaching of our ancestors. These original teachings give rise to an understanding of some basic concepts that have implications for the earth that are different from those held by the dominant perspective.

Sacred Responsibility

We are all aware that the current dominant perspective draws its roots from thousands of years of cultural diversity and from specific elements of cultural evolution. These have had significant impact on what that perspective was to become. Just as significant, Indigenous history draws its roots from thousands of years of cultural evolution that began around our first fires. In our case, this development has culminated in a different world view.

Indigenous people have always been intimately aware of their symbiotic relationship with the earth based upon a delicate balance between all living things on Turtle Island. Turtle Island is the name we use for the land that derives its history from the creation story of the Ojibway people- this story is similar in many respects to the creation story of other Indigenous nations. This understanding did not arise from a romanticized version of our relationship to the earth. It developed before contact with other societies and was based upon the basic law. This law was quite simply, life and death. Indigenous understandings of this have always been quite clear. Through the process of cultural evolution, we have developed our customs, beliefs, institutions and methods of social control; our sense of belonging and connectedness to the earth, all are based upon the original law.

There is a teaching passed down from our ancestors that crystallizes our sense of responsibility and our relationship to the earth that arises out of the original law. It is said that we are placed on the earth (our Mother) to be the caretakers of all that is here. We are instructed to deal with the plants, animals, minerals, human beings and all life, as if they were a part of ourselves. Because we are a part of Creation, we cannot differentiate or separate ourselves from the rest of the earth. The way in which we interact with the earth, how we utilize the plants, animals and the mineral gifts, should be carried out with the seventh generation in mind. We cannot simply think of ourselves and our survival; each generation has a responsibility to "ensure the survival for the seventh generation".

Side Bar note: We are placed on the earth (our Mother) to be the caretakers of all that is here.

Natural Law and Spirituality

Indigenous people occupied the land for thousands of years before contact with Europeans. During this period of pre-contact, our ancestors developed ways and means of relating to each other and to the land, based upon a very simple and pragmatic understanding of their presence on this earth. If they failed to consider what the environment had to offer, how much it could give, and at what times it was prepared to do this-they would simply die. This basic law held for every living thing on the earth. All living creatures had to be cognizant of the structure of the day, the cycle of the seasons and their effects on all other living matter. If the plant world tried to grow in the winter, it would die, the earth was not prepared to give life at this time. If the animal world did not heed the changing of the seasons and prepare themselves, by leaving the immediate environment for a more hospitable one or by storing fat for the winter, they would die. If the people were to deplete the animal or plant resources of their immediate environment, pain and suffering could be expected. This understanding gave rise to a relationship that is intimately connected to the sustainability of the earth and its resources.

Our ancestors tell us that the cycles of the seasons were in themselves full of meaning. The changing of the seasons reflected and paralleled the changes in our lives from birth to old age. Spring was a time of renewal, of new life and new beginnings, as in the birth of a child. Summer was a time of plenty, a time to explore and to grow, as in the time of youth. Fall was the time to incorporate the teaching of the previous two cycles and to harvest and crystallize the knowledge that we had been given, as in the middle years of life. Winter was the time of patience and understanding and the time to teach and to plan for the next cycle of life, the time of old age. Not only did the seasons provide us with lessons, but also the animals provided us with teaching about ourselves and our role.

Each animal and plant had something to teach us about our responsibility to the earth. For example, the tiny mouse teaches us to focus, to observe the world with all our energy and our being and to appreciate the wonder of our world. The bear teaches us to walk quietly upon the earth and to live in harmony with the cycles. One had only to observe and to take the time to see with more than our eyes and our mind. These teachings were heeded very solemnly by our ancestors. The institutions and the relationships that developed over thousands of years of interdependence have become tied perennially to our psyche as Indigenous people.

The consequences of this relationship with the earth and its gifts are a profound, intimate and respectful relationship with all living things and a deep reverence for the mystery of life. In our ways, spiritual consciousness is the highest form of politics. When we begin to separate ourselves from that which sustains us, we immediately open up the possibility of losing understanding of our responsibility and our kinship to the earth. When we view the world simply through the eyes of human beings we create further distance between ourselves and our world. When the perceived needs of one spirit being is held above all others, equality disappears. We can view the things of the earth as "resources", to be used for our own benefit. We can take without thought to the consequence. We can trick ourselves into believing that our life and the life of others have improved. While doing all of this, we can quite readily forget that at some point in time the earth will no longer be able to give and we will no longer be able to take. As the separation between human beings and the earth widens so the chances of our survival lessen.

From this basic understanding, our ancestors assumed their role as the spiritual guardians of the earth. One of the most significant illustrations of this is the central belief that the whole of creation is a sacred place. Because of this we are directed to exercise respect at all times for the gifts that are bestowed upon us all, not simply for those gifts that sustain our life, but also for the lessons that the creation provides us with each and every day. At the first level of understanding we see the relationship between humans and their basic biological needs as they relate to the earth. The second level creates the relationship that ties the biological need to the Spiritual. This is a dialectic relationship. More than ingesting the fruits of our labor through one orifice and discharging them through another, it is a fundamental alliance with the earth.

Side Bar note: ¹ Each generation has a responsibility to “ensure the survival for the seventh generation”

² When we begin to separate ourselves from that which sustains us, we immediately open up the possibility of losing understanding of our responsibility and our kinship to the earth.

The Evolution of Indigenous Institutions

COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND FAMILY STRUCTURES

The basic law that was the driving force behind the development of our culture is reflected in the institutions and systems of our people. Because of the social nature of human beings, life since time immemorial has been the story of group process. The hunting and gathering activities aimed at the survival of the group demanded cooperation between individuals to acquire food, materials for shelter and clothing and implements for hunting and gathering. While the basic law was the driving force, nature was the theatre in which the development of our culture occurred. In this theatre, our ancestors organized themselves into communal groups that were egalitarian, self-sufficient and intimately connected to the land and its resources.

Our ancestors had a capacity for educating our children, outlining social responsibilities, acquiring the necessities for their survival and for establishing and maintaining relationships among themselves and other bands. All of this occurred inside of a system of organization that derived its parameters from nature—the clan system.

While the ancestors in our territories developed social structures based on hunting and gathering in communal bands, the social structure of other communal band societies varied. Indigenous people in what is now eastern Canada developed an agricultural economy and a matriarchal system of governing with its implementation in the longhouse. The West Coast Nations developed different and more elaborate social structures, and a higher level of productivity. These differing reflections of communal band society life were a reflection of the variation in the resource base which were a function of climate. The more temperate coastal and southern areas gave rise to more abundant resources which could support a larger population. A larger population required different means of regulating the social, economic and political life of the group. But they shared an understanding about their relationship to the earth with our ancestors and their economy was characteristically the same. They produced to meet their survival needs and did not accumulate. The development of social institutions and mechanisms of social control

were premised upon the same understanding of their relationship to the earth.

The clan system arose from the observations of the natural world. The earth was full of knowledge about the way each piece of the environment contributed to a balance of the whole. Each animal and plant had a function that was intimately connected to another aspect of the environment. Our ancestors observed these relationships and based their understanding of themselves on the lessons of the earth. Each animal possessed a gift, a way of living in the total environment that allowed it to fulfill its obligation to the larger picture. At the most obvious level, the wolf was considered to be an example of strength and determination with allegiance to the pack and special prowess as a hunter. Those who were born into this clan were expected to understand the wolf and its characteristics to better understand their role with respect to the community.

Today, wolf mythology paints a fierce and bloody picture of the life of the wolf. We know him differently. Our creation story tells of our relationship to the wolf as our first relative. During the time of creation, the first human was very lonely. Because of this, the wolf was sent to walk with the human until the task of exploring and understanding the Creation was complete. When this was done, the wolf and human were told that the wolf and human would always walk separate but parallel paths. The strong relationship and dependence on the land and its gifts for survival is the same for the wolf and for humans. As the wolf is threatened, so too is the human.

The clan forms the guidelines for action and for socialization in the group. The responsibilities of each clan filled out the requirements necessary for all aspects of band life. There were medicine people who followed one clan, hunters who followed another and leaders who followed yet another. At this level, there was opportunity to ensure that the social, economic and political needs of the community were fulfilled in the context of the relationship to the environment. The observations of the animal world illustrated to our ancestors the ways and means by which the earth sustained itself in a manner that established a sense of order and relatedness. Through understanding the animals and their relationship to the earth and their connectedness to other animals and plant life, our ancestors integrated themselves into this natural order.

At another level, each individual could expect to be connected to a large group of extended family members. That is, it was not simply the mother, father and children that formed the nucleus of the family. The family usually consisted of aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews and grandparents as active members of the daily operations of family life. Additionally, it was not unusual to "adopt" new members into the family for various reasons. This would happen whenever a child was orphaned, a family was unable to care for a child or whenever there was great respect for someone so that person would be adopted as a brother or sister.

This kind of family system is different in form and substance than the nuclear family in western family structures. Inside of these extended family systems, the roles and responsibilities were shared. For example, in our system it isn't always the role of the mother and father to provide discipline. Rather, it was often the aunts, uncles and cousins who performed this duty. Additionally, each member shared responsibility for educating the children, caring for the sick or injured, providing for shelter and obtaining the necessary food requirement for survival.

This understanding of our shared responsibilities and our need to cooperate for survival were the guidelines that further substantiated and solidified our roles inside our family systems. These family systems worked toward the development of the day-to-day survival requirements of our people. The clan system was based upon the observations of the earth and its creations and became reflected in the manner in which we defined and understood ourselves. The communal aspect of family life solidified the meanings of sharing and cooperation among the members of the band and made them an integral part of survival.

Side Bar Note: ¹ Our ancestors organized themselves into communal groups that were egalitarian, self-sufficient and intimately connected to the land and its resources.

² Inside of extended family systems each member share responsibility for educating the children, caring for the sick or injured, providing for shelter and obtaining the necessary food requirement for survival.

³ Inside of extended family systems each member shared responsibility for educating the children, caring for the sick or injured, providing for shelter and obtaining the necessary food requirement for survival.

Other Indigenous Views: Asian World View: While there is diversity of culture, issues, struggles and levels of organization among the Asian Indigenous people, they also share a lot of commonalities. The most important of these is a commonly shared world view. Harmony with nature – was characteristic of how Asian people lived in the past and even up to the present. The Earth is regarded as a living entity and everything it contains has a soul. Source: Tauli-Corpuz, 1992.

DECISION-MAKING AND THE DIVISION OF LABOR

At the macro level, when decisions had to be made that affected the whole community, each clan would sit around a central fire with all other clans. Decisions the clans made together might include when to move, conservation of the resources of the territories, the striking of alliances and relationships with other nations and how to implement these decisions. Usually after much discussion and further consultation with their clan members, decisions would be made that would respect the interests of all clans and their members. Decisions, were not arrived at in the same manner as is in western society, through majority vote. When decisions had to be made, it would only be accomplished through a consensus process. All people had to agree with the course of action or no action was taken.

It would seem that there would be a danger of doing nothing at all at the risk of the community. But because all people shared an understanding of the survival needs of the community and the patterns of life on the land, this did not usually occur.

For example, the decision to move camp to a different part of the territories, because of the changing of the seasons, was one arrived at without great discussion and debate. Survival depended on it and experience had proven to be the best teacher. Decisions arrived at in this manner were then carried through with respect to the responsibilities of each clan and their members. When it was time to implement a decision for the community, each member took their personal responsibility very seriously and with equal respect for the other's task.

In terms of the division of labor, another aspect of clan politics was reflected in the way leadership was chosen. While the clan was represented at the central fire it was not always represented by the same person. In fact, who was there was dependant upon the decision to be made. If it had to do with the assessment of the resources of the immediate territory, the clans would send their best hunters and medicine people to discuss the issue at hand. Quite simply, they were the best barometers of the resources and could make informed discussion on the subject. As well, medicine people were used to forecast the potential of the resources from their knowledge of the seasons, changes in patterns and their intimate relationship with the spirit world. If it were a decision that related to contact with another band, warriors and statesmen would be sent to discuss the matter. When we call people warriors, consider it in the context of protectors of the people not in the context of a standing army that is the reality of today.

In terms of the decision-making role of the central fire through the clan systems, it was not always a static body politic that convened at regular intervals and attempted to answer all the questions of the community. Rather, it was leadership appointed by experience and representation and convened at those times that decisions would have to be made. The Elders of the community were consistently present. It was, and still is, the belief of our people that Elders are held in high esteem. They alone have the experience and wisdom of the years and the deep understanding of our roles as Indigenous people and our relationship to Creation.

At the micro level, the division of labor with respect to the clans and their roles, was based upon need, survival and family structure. This was the arena of every-day decision-making affecting each member of the clan and extended family. Each member had a role to play in acquiring the substance of survival. Men were the hunters and the warriors of the community while women performed the role of teachers and transmitters of the values; they were the socializers of the children. The children themselves were teachers to the younger siblings and relatives, as well as performing tasks around the camp. The old people were the transmitters of the stories and legends that kept alive our direct connection to the natural order of things and the natural law.

Anthropological studies have often portrayed the life of the Indigenous women as hard and laborious, while the lives of men were full of gamesmanship and revelry. It was certainly true that life was hard, but it is obvious in this interpretation that ethnocentric bias rears its head. Men hunted out of survival necessity, not simply as an opportunity to be out in the bush for a wilderness experience. Today, modern man waits for the season, then slips into hunting regalia and off to the bush where they pit their skills against the wily creatures of the forest. In true sportsmanlike fashion, they kill the beast, wrench their trophy from the still warm carcass of the animal and discard the rest to rot in the forest. This was not the case of the Indigenous hunter. With crude instruments by today's standards, the Indigenous hunter entered the forest in communion with nature. Prayers were offered to the spirit of the animals asking for pity for the hunter and his family that the animal would give up its life in order to feed and clothe them. Oftentimes the men would return empty-handed and hunger was the outcome. The Importance of the women's role as gatherers took on greater significance at this time; without them the family and the community would starve. So, the romantic and the ethnocentric version of the division of labor in Indigenous societies is quickly relegated to the western novel and the western bias from which it arises.

Women's roles centered around the camp. The tasks associated with this are considered, by today's western standards, as those less appreciated worthwhile. Western thought considers this interpretation of women's roles to be sexist and demeaning. In Indigenous societies, it was a survival the ones who had the ability of Creation, they could bring life into the world. Their role was defined by their biology to some degree. As the creators of life, they were charged with the sacred responsibility of caring for the needs of the next generation. This meant that much of the work contributed by the women was in the context of the immediate environment of the camp. However, it's important to note that the work women performed was not devalued as it is in western society. In fact, we are told that women should be afforded the utmost respect, for it is only they who have the capacity to create new life. They are closer to the Creator than men could ever hope to be. Balance is natural to them where men struggle each day of their lives to achieve and maintain this. The reality was one of survival based upon necessity and cooperation of all members, male and female alike. The manner in which women are treated today in Indigenous communities is not a function of our history but is more a function of our contact with western society.

The role that children played with respect to the family and the clan was important to the survival of the group in a significant way. While children were given the opportunity to explore and grow with their gifts, there was an expectation that they participate in the life of the family and community in more than a playful and inquisitive way. As they grew and learned about their environment, they would be expected to provide a frame of reference for the younger children. Additionally, the older children would be expected to contribute to the family through the gathering fuel, foodstuffs and materials for the maintenance of the camp.

The old people played a central role in many aspects of the daily life of the people. They were first and foremost the transmitters of the culture itself. Through legends and stories they would impart to all members, including the children, the history of the people and the deep understanding of our relationship to our Mother the earth. They would provide advice and guidance when we became unsure of our role or when we didn't know what to do. They watched over the children and protected them from harm. They watched over the parents and ensured that they were doing their part in the care and maintenance of the family and the clan. They advised the appointed leaders by calling upon their years of experience and knowledge of their role and relationship to the Creation.

Side Bar Note: ¹ Elders are held in high esteem. They alone have the experience and wisdom of the years.

Other Indigenous Views: The Six Nations confederacy: The most well known example of Indigenous systems was the Six Nations Confederacy of the longhouse (The Hau de no sau nee). The Six Nations were comprised of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Senecas, Cayugas and the Tuscaroras. Their territory stretched from Vermont to Ohio and from present-day Quebec to Tennessee. Representatives from each of these nations were organized by a central fire where each of these nation's representative was chosen through the clan mothers. These representatives could be "impeached" if, at any time, they did not represent the views and the aspirations of the nation. Laws with respect to territories, hunting and fishing and nation-to-

nation responsibilities were outlined and agreed upon through the central fire. Consensus was the rule of order; where this could not be reached, the issue would be set aside until such time as further thought could be given to the matter. Although the process for decision-making could be lengthy, the result was more practical and applicable, as all members would reach agreement. This first true system of "Democracy" was borrowed, and the principles of the Constitution of the United States of America are parallel to the basic principles and systems as the Six Nations Confederacy. Source: Hau de no sau nee, 1978.

Respect as the Basis of our Relationship to the Earth

Sustaining an existence in an environment that changes from season to season, cycle to cycle, has had significant impact on the evolution of culture. The life of the people became a reflection of the life of the earth and our ancestors became intimately connected and inseparable from these natural realities. Through many years of experience, trial and error, hunger and hardship, our ancestors learned that the depletion of plant and animal life in their immediate environment meant starvation and death. The practical outcome of this was the movement of the people to match the changes of the season and the cycle of the earth and its gifts. The ways in which our ancestors organized themselves through the clan system and designation of roles and responsibilities, were always in relation to the earth and our responsibility to its maintenance and its care for future generations. The practical realities of survival gave rise to an understanding of this role as sacred and intimately connected to the Creation. Additionally, the patterns of life could be seen as a circular relationship. Everything that the people did today would have repercussions for tomorrow and for their own survival and the survival of future generations.

As for the sacredness of the land, seeing the world in relationship to ourselves and containing the same essence (spirit) that connected all of us to the creation, excluded the possibility of assuming ownership over creation or any aspect of it. Oren Lyons states:

we native (Indigenous) people did not have concept of private property in our lexicon, and the principles of private property were pretty much in conflict with our value system. For example you wouldn't see 'no hunting' or 'no fishing' or 'no trespassing' signs in our territories. To a native person such signs would have been equivalent to 'no breathing' because the air is somebody's private property. If you said to the people, 'the Ontario government owns all the air in Ontario, and if you want some, you are going to have to go and see the Bureau of Air,' we would all laugh. (1984)

All of life had access rights to the use of the land and its gifts within reason. Reason of course, was based on the reality that exploiting the land to extinction would ultimately mean your own extinction. Although there were distinct and known boundaries of territories marked by rivers, mountains and valleys, these boundaries usually represented some aspect of the territories' ability to sustain the people. That is, it could be expected that the people would utilize several different territories over the course of the seasons. This seasonal migration was a natural conservation technique that was based on the land's ability to sustain life. People did not own the land, they simply used it and moved on allowing the land and the plant and animal life to re-generate itself.

This understanding held for all living things of the Creation. As there were plant and animal

matter in the Creation, there were also other people living in the territories whose life was dependent upon the respectful use of the gifts of the land. Our ancestors were careful to respect the use of the territories and to ensure that they did not infringe upon the livelihood of another people. It is true that differences of opinion occurred between the different Nations, but these matters were usually settled without bloodshed. The reality faced by all peoples of the land was that all energy was expended in surviving from season to season. Fighting was an unnecessary expenditure of energy where negotiations and discussion would accomplish the same ends. Indigenous people all shared the same understanding of the Creation and the realities of survival. To deviate from this would be a transgression of the role that they had been assigned. Further, the long history of the relationship to the land had ordered the nations so that each sustained their livelihood with respect to the territories and their differential gifts. The buffalo hunters maintained their territories and the hunters of moose and deer maintained theirs. There was more than enough for all the nations to acquire their livelihood from the earth.

Side Bar Note: ¹ The practical realities of survival gave rise to an understanding of this role as sacred and intimately connected to the creation.

² Exploiting the land to extinction would ultimately mean your own extinction.

Contrasting Views

The previous discussion explains some of our perceptions regarding the difference in our relationship to the earth and those found in western thinking. These perceptions are at the heart of our differing understandings of our role on this planet. It is not the purpose of this report to provide a complete discussion and analysis of common knowledge with respect to western thinking; what we will do, however, is to contrast those perceptions we believe to be widely accepted in western thinking with the perceptions of Indigenous people already presented in the previous discussion. There are five major perceptions that speak most clearly about our differing views. These are:

- ▶ the nature of our relationship to the planet,
- ▶ the place of self and community in the actualization of that relationship,
- ▶ our conception of the organic matter of the planet,
- ▶ the reasons for utilizing the organic matter of the planet, and
- ▶ the vision for our existence as it relates to sustainability.

None of these are mutually exclusive; they relate and are interrelated, simply because these perceptions are a product of our development as social beings. They are presented here as separate pieces for the purposes of description, although we have tried to present them in a logical order.

SACRED SECULAR

Our belief is that spirituality is the highest form of consciousness. In this belief is the understanding, outlined in the previous sections, that all of Creation is sacred and must be shown respect in everything we do. Each and every thing must be afforded the same respect, as we would show to our Creator. Our ways of being reflect this perception of the sacredness of Creation in all facets of our life. The Hau de no sau nee address states:

The original instructions direct that we who walk on the earth are to express a great respect, affection, and gratitude toward all the spirits which create and support life. We give greeting and thanksgiving to the many supporters of our lives - the corn, beans, squash, the winds, the sun. When people cease to respect and express gratitude for these many things, all life will be destroyed, and human life on this planet will come to an end... We are not people who demand, or ask anything of the Creators of life, but instead, we give greetings and thanksgivings that all the forces of life are still at work. We deeply understand our relationship to all living things... (1978)

In contrast, western thinking, as we see and understand it, does not perceive the earth as bound by any rules or "original teachings" that relate to our responsibility to the earth. The relationship is secularized; religious and sacred forms are removed in favor of the perception of the earth as under the control and in the possession of humans. There is no longer a living and dialectic relationship to the earth, rather the earth is seen as a passive entity whose resources need to be harnessed to have utility for human beings. Rather than viewing the gifts of creation with respect and reverence as intimately interconnected, they are seen as resources whose only purpose is to serve the growing needs of humans.

Side Bar Note: ¹Recognition and respect for the equality of all the elements of life is necessary because it brings us into perspective as human beings.

GIFTS OF THE CREATION RESOURCES FOR EXPLOITATION

Our ancestors believed that all of Creation contained a spirit essence no less significant than our own. Each plant, animal and mineral was placed on the earth to serve a purpose that was intimately connected to all other things. In taking a life in the plant or animal world, our ancestors entered a relationship with great respect and humility, because it was the spirit that was being asked to give of itself so the people could live. This spirit was akin to our own. Oren Lyons states;

Recognition and respect for the equality of all the elements of life is necessary because it brings us into perspective as human beings. If all life is to be considered equal, then we are no more or no less than anything else. Therefore all life is to be respected. Whether it is a tree, a deer, or a fish it must be respected because it is equal. We believe it is equal because we are spiritual people... If we are to put this belief into practice, then we must protect life and all its manifestations. (1984)

This way of perceiving life on the earth guided our ancestors in the use of the gifts of Creation. As a result, the life of the Indigenous person maintained a balance between the needs of the community and self and the ability of the creation to provide. This was done in a respectful way and with the understanding of our responsibility to the spirits of the creation.

Western thinking, on the other hand, does not relate to the gifts of creation as spiritual things but simply views the life of the planet as "resources." This way of understanding life allows for the separation of facts from values. Again, this secularized viewpoint severs the intimate relationship that we have with the planet and allows us to disconnect our thoughts and our feelings from the relationship to life, in whatever form; it allows the exploitation of the "resources" of the earth without thought or consideration to the overall repercussions of our acts.

COLLECTIVE/INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

The development of Indigenous culture evolved inside of the nation, band, community and the clan structure. This led to the development of a sense of responsibility, that was actualized into a division of labor aimed at the benefit of the group. Each individual's activity with respect to survival was only one aspect of meeting the needs of the group. All members were expected to contribute to the benefit of the larger group and "O one person held a role any less significant than the other. This interdependence was again a reflection of the lessons of nature gleaned from the observations of the relationship of all living things to each other. In this relationship, there was not only equality with the other spirits of the creation, but there was equality with all other people. No person was any less than the other, each had a role to perform in Creation by virtue of the gifts bestowed upon that person. Each member was quite simply only a piece of the overall scheme of things and had something to contribute that was valued equally with all others.

The human relationships were intimately connected by virtue of the spirit. In western thinking the development of western culture has, for the most, been influenced by the ideologies of the industrial revolution. While appearances indicate differences in these ideologies, to our thinking they are premised on the same basic elements. Each believes strongly in industry and technology as the answers to the problems of humans and each has a strong belief in the state as the guiding force for their nations. This dependence on large-scale production of goods, which is grounded in the idea that the earth has unlimited resources for use, becomes equated with progress. Progress is equated with the satisfaction of the material wants of the people and eventually has led to a consumer-oriented society. Satisfying these needs is generally done in the context of the nuclear family with competition among family units for the scarce resources to satisfy their growing needs. Not only does competition exist between families; it exists within the family as well. With the development of the mechanisms of the state and the market geared toward production and accumulation, the pursuit and attainment of individual wants and needs becomes the hallmark of success. A bumper sticker that we have seen on many cars states it well, "he who has the most toys at the end...wins!" This saying goes to the heart of the thinking of western culture. People have become so separate from other human beings that they have placed themselves in opposition to each other. Dependence on your fellow man is viewed as what you can get from them that places you in a better position. Where there are problems of human suffering, westerners turn to the state or the market for amelioration. In this instance, responsibility and control is further separated from the individual and the community, the have-nets become

somebody else's problem and responsibility. While we would agree that the state has responsibility for its people, that responsibility must interpret into community action and state support. The creation of large infrastructures and varied bureaucracies has divorced the people from their responsibility.

BALANCE AS A WAY OF LIFE/LINEAR GROWTH

In our ways, the concept of balance plays a central role in our thinking about self, family, community and nation. In this thinking, our needs in terms of survival must always be balanced with the needs of our families, our community and our nation. Additionally, we have not separated our political, social, economic and spiritual aspects of our lives into discrete parts. The central belief that all things are sacred and a gift from the creation immediately assumes a relationship that demands respect and reverence at all times. Our ancestors and our traditional People today have used the concept of the circle to illustrate this idea of balance. The medicine wheel, as it has been called, can help to conceptualize all aspects of our existence. The four points of the circle represent the four colors of human being: yellow; black, red, and white. Placed on the circle we are reminded that each of the colors of man have a place in the scheme of things that relates to their responsibility to Creation. Self, family, community and nation are also four points of the circle. Fire, water, earth and air are also four points. Mind, body, spirit and Creation are another four. As human beings, the challenge is to keep these things in balance. The work of human beings is to do this in the context of our responsibility to our Mother the earth. In this thinking, we are given the responsibility for ensuring that no one aspect of our existence takes precedence over the other. Everything that we do has consequences for something else. This circular pattern of thinking is a constant reminder to us that we are all intimately connected to Creation.

Western thinking differs in that human development is viewed as linear growth aimed at satisfying some particular want or need. This thinking plays itself out in the understanding of the gifts of our mother as simply "resources". They are to be produced, exchanged, used and expended. The relationship from start to finish is severed and there is no need to consider what the repercussions of the act mean to the other aspects of Creation. Further, the continuing expansion of need that arises from a consumer-oriented society assumes that the earth has unending potential to provide. With this thinking humans are able to equate growth with the continued and unending accumulation of wealth. Satisfaction of one need leads to another "perceived need" and the process continues and grows forever moving forward. Continued expansion on one end at the expense of the earth on the other is totally out of balance with the natural teachings of the earth. At some point in time, the repercussions of this ignorance about balancing our needs with the needs of the earth will culminate in the Creations inability to sustain life. As we are only one aspect of this life, this outcome includes us as well.

Side Bar Note: ¹ Our needs in terms of survival, must always be balanced with the needs of our families, our community and our nation.

² Everything that we do has consequences for something else. This circular pattern of thinking is a constant reminder to us that we are all ultimately connected to creation.

RESPONSIBILITY TO THE SEVENTH GENERATION/RESPONSIBILITY TO SELF

The Indigenous people, our people, were aware of their responsibility, not just in terms of balance for the immediate life; they were also aware of the need to maintain this balance for the seventh generation to come. The prophecy given to us, tells us that what we do today will affect the seventh generation and because of this we must bear in mind our responsibility to them today and always. Because of the sacredness of Creation and the connection to the spirit life of the earth, we were directed to treat the earth with great care and respect. Our spirits will be carried forward into the next generations and our teachings toward the earth will be carried along with this. If at some point we fail to consider these teachings, the balance that was maintained through the teachings will disappear and we will disappear. It is often said that our people having concept of time and no investment in the future. In fact, our concept of time forces us to think hundreds of years into the future. The investment we make is not measured in dollars or in material wealth, it is measured in terms of our ability to insure that what is here for us today is here for our children and our children's' children tomorrow.

Western thinking on the other hand, looks at the world in terms of what can be done today to satisfy the growing wants and needs of self that is endemic of a consumer-oriented society. Planning for the future is translated into further accumulation of wealth that will continue to satisfy growing needs. The fact that we may exhaust the planet under these conditions arises from dependence on science and technology; and it is believed that they can provide us with the answers to the very same problems they created. Western people depend on technology and new technological advancement to improve the conditions of humans and to create new ways of providing for our growing wants and needs. Despite the fact that technology has created many of the environmental problems we face today, it is held as the answer to dealing with the byproducts of a growing industrial and technological society that have polluted the water systems, destroyed a multitude of life forms, fouled the air and water, and in the quest for new energy, has altered the environment of the planet forever. All of this is perpetrated on the planet with a casualness and lack of concern that create an illusory view that the planet has boundless resources to provide for our benefit. This false sense of security, that is the off-shoot of a consumer oriented society, and that is often perpetrated through big business and ultimately through government, lulls the population into complacency and inaction. Even where we have been cognizant of the damage done to the planet, we still place our hopes on the technology that created it and the systems that caused it to happen. Western institutions which are built upon representative democracy and the free market and which make incremental decisions aimed at increasing wealth of the people, the corporations and the state, have played a significant role in the shortsightedness of people's responsibility to the planet. It is ironic that a culture that accuses another of having no concept of time and the future has itself no concept of this responsibility other than accumulation of wealth.

Side Bar Note: ¹ The prophecy tells us that what we do today will affect the seventh generation and we must bear in mind our responsibility to them today and always.

Processes of impoverishment

The previous sections of the report have outlined the development of Indigenous identity that was based on their relationship to the earth that culminated in the intimate symbiotic relationship between Indigenous people and the environment. With the coming of the Europeans to Turtle Island, new relationships began to develop and the culture of the our people was altered significantly. For a number of reasons that relate to the change in the economic, social and political life of the people, this alteration was not a positive one. We will attempt to provide some understanding of these processes with respect to:

- ▶ the disruption of the traditional economies
- ▶ integration into the global economy
- ▶ modernization
- ▶ environmental and social degradation due to disruptive development schemes
- ▶ the marginalization of women and youth

While we will be discussing the above as separate pieces, it must be understood that each of these processes of impoverishment either very quickly followed or ran parallel to each other. These processes are interdependent and act to reinforce the effects and the implications of each other throughout the period.

These processes reflect the history of colonization in our territories and we would venture to guess that similarities exist with other Indigenous peoples in other territories. Further, we believe that the normal workings of the market led to the destruction of the traditional economies of our ancestors and to integration into the international economy. While it is difficult to separate out the specific elements that can be attributed to any of the above processes, we have attempted to describe separately market implications, and the deliberate attempts at modernization, (or civilizing as was the catchword of the day) by the government and other agents of the mainstream society.

Side Bar Note: ¹ The prerequisites of survival called for cooperation and sharing among all members. For the most part, surplus accumulation was not a practice.

The Disruption of the Traditional Economies

Our ancestors sustained their livelihood from the environment based upon the survival needs of the group. As hunting and gathering societies, they were organized through the clan system and extended family relationships. The prerequisites of survival called for cooperation and sharing among all members. Our ancestors acquired the gifts of the earth and distributed these to all members including the sick, the old people and those who were unable to contribute for whatever reason. For the most part, surplus accumulation was not a practice of our ancestors except in

those instances where it was necessary to prepare for the changes of the seasons and the cycles of the plant and animal life, to meet survival requirements during the lean times. Some accumulation would also occur where there was an exchange relationship with another nation. These surpluses were used to solidify allegiances or to obtain items not available in the immediate territory.

With the introduction of production for exchange, traditional economies began the process of transformation that would change our history forever. Whereas our ancestors had been able to sustain their existence and the existence of all members directly from the environment, the introduction of trade goods and money, over time, created a dependence on the products of the European market system. Increasing dependency for essential items such as clothing, food, implements such as rifles, shelter and other technologies very quickly became the norm. In the beginning of the relationship between our ancestors and the European merchants, the Indigenous subsistence economy co-existed with the production for exchange economy. Although the subsistence economy survives to this day and many Indigenous people still continue to gain their livelihood in this way, it often functions to subsidize the commercial sector. This is true because of the exploitive nature of the market economy that provides only the bare minimum in returns and forces Indigenous people to maintain some semblance of the traditional economies in order to survive. The existence of the subsistence economy actually increases the rate of exploitation for Indigenous producers. While workers must receive a level of wage that ensures their reproduction, for Indigenous people, commodity prices have been kept artificially low because people are able to support themselves through the subsistence economy.

Other Indigenous Views: Encounter with Modernity in Marwar, India: all life – human, animal, and vegetable – has flourished, in this hostile region by evolving a delicate and precarious relationship with the fragile eco-system. However, the integrated mode of life in this region has been destabilized in the early 19th century when the colonial rulers of India initiated a re-ordering of the region into a commercial periphery of London and Liverpool. By the turn of the 19th century the region began to be ravaged by prolonged droughts, famine and mass hunger. Marwar became a synonym for the region of death.

Even though the people of Marwar had always perceived a direct relationship between close grazing sheep and goat and the consequent desertification and increasing recurrence of drought and famine, they could not hold to their ground once the region was linked with the London and Liverpool markets and wool, mutton, and hides became marketable commodities. The “cow protectors” soon transformed into sheep breeders without much cultural resistance.

Yet another blow to survival structures in the arid zone was dealt during the 1950s when land was privatized under the banner of “land reforms” after India’s freedom from the British in 1947. The result was a basic restructuring, fraught with dangerous and unimagined consequences of the arid zone’s social and physical environment. Formerly life in the Thar was based primarily on pastoral economy, supplemented by cottage crafts and marginal agricultural all linked to a “community sense” with the natural resources. Now agriculture appears to be the “primary source of sustenance” and at the same time the pressure on pastoral sector has increased manifold. Source: Arun Kumar, 1991.

THE DISPLACEMENT OF TRADITIONAL SUBSISTENCE WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF CASH CROP PRODUCTION.

In cases where the goods produced for the market were the same as traditional products, as was the case with furs, fish, game and a range of agricultural products, the production of goods for the market was simply an extension of direct use. In these situations, our ancestors used their knowledge of the land, the soil and the resource base to produce commercial products, and their continued use of their own technology reduced the costs of production. In other cases, however, new plant and animal varieties were introduced by the colonists, either as cash crops or in large agricultural plantations.

The shifting to cash crops displaced the production of food for local consumption and began to compromise traditional agricultural practices. The pressure to continue subsistence food production along with cash crops, in order to survive, led to the abandonment of traditional practices that had ensured the sustainability of the land. One of the immediate outcomes of this was the increasing malnutrition of the Indigenous population. In order to increase the yield, the best land was used for cash crops leaving the more marginal and distant lands for subsistence agriculture. The increasing use of these marginal lands and the over use of land generally led to soil depletion, increasing deforestation and a reduction in the quality of food produced for consumption.

Additionally, as the new settlers filled the territories, they took over the best lands for the production of the newly introduced cash crops. This land grab was sanctioned by the government of the day, and the Indigenous people were pushed even further into more marginal lands. As the demand for land increased to accommodate growing agricultural needs and animal husbandry, the deforestation of the territories began to escalate. Overuse of the land and the destruction of animal habitat made subsistence living more and more difficult. The outcome of this growing trend, and the displacement of our people from their subsistence lifestyle, has increased dependency and in many instances has led to malnutrition among our people.

DISPOSSESSION AND MARGINALIZATION FROM THE LAND

In the early heyday of the fur trade and exploration of the “new land”, our ancestors were of critical importance to the survival of the Europeans and to the exploitation of the emerging fur industry. The relationship that existed in those earlier times could be construed as an equal trade relationship where each group depended on the other for survival. However, as the utility of the Indigenous population declined and the lust for new land increased, our people were separated from their land and this land was transferred to the new immigrants for western agricultural settlement. Treaties and reserves, (tracts of land set aside for Indigenous people) were the mechanisms adopted by the government to secure control over the traditional territories of our people. Government policy was established for the purpose of clearing the land for agricultural settlement and resource exploitation. Legislation was enacted to give the government monopoly over all resources, including forests, fish and wildlife, mineral and water rights. The traditional relationship to the land based upon the sacred use of the gifts of the earth was displaced by government systems, and our people were restricted from all harvest except for consumption. Even those harvesting rights were severely eroded over time.

As a result of the relationship of dependence that had been created over the period of the fur trade, our people have been forced into accepting treaties and the constraints of federal legislation. Choice was non-existent: people had either to accept the treaties or to lose forever what little was left of the traditional territories. At the time of the treaties on the Canadian prairies, our people were living in an economically underdeveloped society. The fur trade was the pre-condition for the alienation from the land. Our ancestors would never have accepted these terms if they had remained strong economically and socially.

With the dispossession from the land, our ancestors were increasingly marginalized. Their importance to the trade was gone. They were now seen as an encumbrance to the further expansion of agriculture, industry and resource exploitation and as result of this our ancestors became functionally irrelevant to the economy and the national life of the territories. With the change from the fur trade to a wheat economy, traditional lands were ceded to the new settlers and our ancestors were pushed onto unproductive land through the reserve system. Institutional barriers were erected to prevent our ancestors from participating in the new economy, or rather, the new dependence. The situation of the Mic Mac is illustrative of this dynamic:

unlike the fur trade...the Mic Mac were not seen as being able to make a positive contribution to the new and dominating settler economy. Rather, they were regarded with fear and annoyance, as a hindrance to settlement in the early decades of the century...and subsequently as a group forever requiring relief payments from the public purse. Rather than an economy in which both whites and Indians were dependent on each other, Europeans clearly has the upper hand in terms of political and coercive power, and both groups were in direct competition for available scarce resources, control over lands and forests, access to game and fish, and so on. (Wiens, 1984)

Our ancestors were not only shut out of all aspects of the new agricultural economy, they were prevented from participating as wage laborers in the emerging industrial economy by racism and increasing European settlement.

Other Indigenous Views: Common Land in India: Tribal People held their land in commons. Through the process of statization and privatization, beginning with British colonial rule and continuing in the post-colonial period, the extent of the village commons was greatly reduced. Through the creation of a market in forest products, the state disrupted the traditional subsistence economy and contributed massively to the impoverishment of Indigenous peoples. State policies established a monopoly control of forests, reserved large areas for commercial exploitation, and severely curtailed the traditional harvesting rights of the tribal people. These policies promoted the growing of commercially profitable trees under the guise of "scientific forest management" further reducing the availability of those varieties used by local tribal people, and allowed extensive tree clearing to secure construction materials and to permit the establishment of tea and coffee plantations, and large scale agriculture, thereby increasing government tax revenues. The effect of these policies included the erosion of local forest management systems, the separation of Indigenous peoples from their traditional economy, the criminalization of continued forest use, ongoing conflicts between state forestry officials and the local people, and the re-orientation of forest management to meet the needs of commercial

interests. Source: Arun Kumar, 1991

THE USE OF ALCOHOL, CREDIT AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE WELFARE ECONOMY

In trading for furs, the Europeans experienced difficulty in promoting the accumulation of fur stocks. Indigenous people tended not to respond to the usual supply and demand conditions. They would not increase their level of production beyond what was necessary to meet their own needs, and did not respond to higher prices. Because they were not motivated to accumulate material goods, once they had trapped enough to satisfy their need for trade goods, it became unnecessary to continue trapping. The European trade had a difficult time understanding this, particularly where there was profit to be made. Additionally, the European trader was often frustrated having to deal with different people at different times. While they preferred to establish their trade relationship with one individual who exercised power, Indigenous people preferred to exercise a form of rotating leadership that was a part of the system of governance and division of labor found in the clan system. In looking for a way to deal with these impediments to trade, the Europeans followed the lessons of other trade relationships and introduced alcohol to alter the terms of trade in their favour. They began to ply our ancestors with alcohol in order to lower their resistance and to make them more compliant. Alcohol served the needs of the trader simply because it loosened the inhibitions of the Indigenous people. Additionally, significant profits were made through the sale of alcohol.

As the dependence of our ancestors grew and the demands for fur increased, the traders offered credit to the people for the purpose of binding them to one trading company. Often our ancestors would “shop around” for the best deal for their furs and this practice caused the traders some discomfort. The debt load as a result of the inflated prices of the trade goods indentured our ancestors to laboring for one trader exclusively. This bonded labor relationship became possible because of the dependent relationship that was developing as well as through the use of alcohol.

Prior to the fur trade, the economic activity of our ancestors was directly tied to the needs of the people. Profit was not a consideration and there was no unemployment: each member contributed and was valued for their contribution. Unemployment and welfare dependency were unknown until commercial trade upset the balance of local economies. This began happening in the late 1600's in the vicinity of the Hudson's Bay coast. From time to time, post managers found it necessary to provide relief rations when the Cree families, who had been engaged to hunt for the posts, faced winter famine. A century later, this practice spread through the interior around inland trading posts in areas of heavy trade pressure on local labor and resources. This private dependency on relief eroded traditional social relationships and weakened communal and family bonds.

Indigenous economies, like the economies of the Third World, are divergent economies. This means that what is produced locally is not consumed locally and what is consumed locally is not produced locally. Thomas' import-export expenditure coefficient (scaled from zero to one), which measures the divergence between local resource use and demand, is probably greater than one for Indigenous economies, a possibility ruled out by Thomas relative to national economies (Dependence and Transformation, 1974). This is the case for Indigenous economies because of

the high dependency upon state transfer payments, the majority being for welfare and social services. That is,

This level of dependence on “aid” has no parallel in the history of colonialism in Africa, Asia or Latin America and is possible only because Native people represent a colonized minority within one of the wealthiest countries of the world, and because a sizeable state bureaucracy and a number of capitalist and petty bourgeoisie enterprises thrive on native dependence on these transfers. It is necessary because the long history of exploitation of Native people by external capital has created a situation in which such payments are required for the very physical survival of the community. (Loxley, 1981)

Contact with Europeans, first with the fur traders, then with missionaries, government officials and settlers, set off a chain of events that has created a cycle of dependency for our people. The interrelationships between the various factors have developed and been strengthened through generations. These interrelationships reinforce and progressively affect our families and especially our children. The social consequences fall succeedingly more heavily in each generation.

Other Indigenous Views: ¹ The Use of Alcohol and Drugs in other Territories
Alcohol and drugs have always played a key role in the trade with the Indigenous peoples. West Indies rum was used extensively in the North American fur trade, while opium played a similar role in India and China (Rothney, 1975).

The introduction of addictive substances such as opium, tobacco, tea and coffee as cash crops were particularly devastating to Indigenous societies because of the social disruptions caused by addictions and the additional devastation to fragile soils. Among the tribal people of India's Thar desert, the now pervasive addictions to opium, tobacco, tea have been the result of rather slow and smooth processes, often encouraged by the establishment of public liquor stores. To date, there are few individual of societal mechanism available to tribal people by which they could perceive on their own the massive drain these products cause on their thin resource base. Source: Arun Kumar, 1991

² There are areas in South America where Indigenous peoples are virtually slaves through their debt-bonded labour. In such cases, people are often pressured into taking loans at very high interest rates. These debts are paid with labour, but are usually managed in such a way that the debt can never be paid off, resulting in permanent indentured labour. Any attempt to evade can result in imprisonment, and in extreme situations, debtors are murdered and their killers rarely prosecuted. Source: Ichi, 1987

Integration into the Global Economy

Increasingly, national economies are giving way to the global economy. While this is often considered a relatively recent phenomenon, the roots of globalization go back to the first contact between Europeans and Indigenous peoples in various and diverse parts of the world. From the times of first contact, our economies were integrated into the production of commodities for the global market. This was the case whether the commodities were furs, tropical agriculture, precious metals, cotton, rum or opium. While our people have become largely irrelevant to the productive process, in many parts of the world Indigenous people continue to be impoverished

through the production of coffee, coca and other cash crops for the global economy.

GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is the expansion of capital, worldwide, in pursuit of profit, and takes the form of the growth of international trade, of international investment and lending, and the international migration of people...Initially, in Canada, trade was the main form of capitalist expansion through a monopoly company chartered by the British crown. Self-reliant Indian producers...were made dependent on an international company and fickle overseas markets for economic survival, and the intense competition for production very quickly pressed up against the limits of ecology...Elsewhere in the Americas, contact with globalization was more bloody, as adventurers, again sanctioned by royalty, robbed and plundered their way through the Caribbean and South America. The search for precious metals led to death and genocide among Aboriginal people and their ultimate replacement by slaves, tom against their will from the African continent...The form of globalization changed from merchant to industrial capital as the "new world" attracted interest for its forest, mineral, and other natural resources. These activities did nothing positive for Aboriginal people, who do not own or cannot even find jobs in these industries, but rather displaced them from their land and denuded or polluted their environment. In many places, the settlement of European farmers and the "pushing back of the frontier" was the most damaging contact experienced by Aboriginal people. It was bloody, always involved forced removal... More recently forms of globalization have not been any more benevolent to Aboriginal people. The expansion of oil and gas enterprises and of "modern" mineral production, as well as expansion of the military activities of the state have led to further land deprivation, to pollution and to destruction of the animal and vegetable species upon which Aboriginal people depend for their survival... Globalization has benefited Third World countries only partially and very unevenly. A handful of small countries, usually with repressive governments and large aid assistance from the USA, and located strategically located to the booming market of Japan and to recent war zones, have done well. But there are few of these "Asian Tigers", and most third world countries have found themselves trapped in impoverishment as a result of their contact with globalization. In recent years, this has found reflection in the debt crisis and in the most modern form of imperialism, dependence on the capital and the policy dictates of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These international bodies effectively dictate that the Third World will not only service the international debts at terrible cost in terms of human deprivation, but that they also continue to function in the world economy essentially as "hewers of wood and drawers of water" as cash crop producers... Globalization cannot be separated, therefore, from the historic process of the impoverishment of Aboriginal people. On the contrary, it is a principal explanation for their impoverishment. (Loxley, 1992)

Side Bar Notes: ¹ Indigenous people were integrated into the global economy through a worldwide system of mercantile capitalist trading companies.

INTEGRATION INTO THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM

With the first contact with Europeans, there was encroachment by foreign capital. In our territories, the northern part of the Americas, the Hudson's Bay Company was given a royal charter providing monopoly control over Rupertsland, which is a huge area encompassing all of the Hudson Bay drainage area, practically all of present day Canada. Because of the element of risk and the demands for substantial commitment of capital, the company requested and received a trading monopoly. The Hudson's Bay Company was part of an international economic system. London and Paris were the centres of the trade.

Indigenous peoples were integrated into the global economy through a worldwide system of mercantile capitalist trading companies, linked to the British state, and controlled by European interests. These included the Hudson's Bay Company, the East India Company, which was a massive operation heavily linked to the trade in opium, and the Royal Africa Company which was central to the slave trade. These companies were involved in a "triangular" trading system involving Europe, Africa and Asia, and the American colonies. Although the scale of the fur trade in our territories was much smaller by comparison, it played a strategic role in the overall trade. West Indies goods, especially rum, were quite important to the trade in furs. Profits from the fur trade were used to purchase gold bullion making it possible for Britain to trade with India and China since, without gold, Britain didn't have anything that they wanted. Indirectly, the fur trade was also responsible for enabling the purchase of spices from the east, and for shipbuilding in Europe.

One of the central features of integration into the global economic system is the creation of dependence. Local and national economies are dependent on economic decisions taken elsewhere, and lack the potential for autonomous growth. Domestic markets in the "periphery" are narrow because the loss of the economic surplus through exploitive relations with the "centre" meant that investment did not take place locally. These economies are import/export based and are, therefore, extremely vulnerable to the operation of the global market. They are required to sell their commodities at prices determined externally, and must also purchase manufactured goods at prices determined externally. When the global economy is in crisis, as it is now, commodity prices are depressed while the costs of imports increase. The situation of Indigenous economies is similar to that of the developing world generally, because they are often integrated into the production of cash crops for the global market. The experience of the Indigenous coffee growers in Mexico is an indication of how Indigenous peoples continue to suffer from dependency on external sources of demand.

In such a dependency relationship, development and underdevelopment are "the two sides of one coin": development in one area necessarily means underdevelopment in another area. Historically the so-called periphery has suffered from the operation of this principle, but increasingly western industrialized societies are impacted as well. The escalating relocation of production from industrialized countries to "export platforms" in lower-cost areas of the globe is resulting in a shrinking of western economies. It can be seen that allowing capital free reign to roam the world in search of the cheapest labour and raw materials, the lowest tax regimes and the most lenient environmental standards, is not in the interest of people anywhere. When the exploitation of people is added to the massive devastation caused by environmental exploitation,

western peoples must realize that their future is inextricably interwoven with that of nonwestern peoples. Peoples of the industrial north must realize that by acting in solidarity with the struggles of the peoples of the south against environmental destruction and social injustice, they are working to secure their own future as well.

Other Indigenous Views: Indigenous Coffee Producers Coffee represents the second source of income in Mexico, after oil. In Oaxaca, it is the first source of income. Almost 100% of coffee producers are Indigenous and are bound through 21 regional organizations (20,000 producers), regrouped into the State Coordination of Coffee Producers since 1989. This grouping allows them to have access to a larger market, to consolidate their regional organizations, to coordinate their production and marketing activities, and to provide training and advice in regards to management, organization, relations with government and companies. Currently, coffee producers face a severe crisis with a depressed coffee price of \$70 US/quintal, while the current cost of producing it is \$80/quintal. Small producers are victims of behaviours from both governments which weakened the International Coffee Organization either by encouraging dumping practices or by protecting consumers' interest, and from transnationals who buy at the cheapest price. This situation makes it almost impossible for small producers to make a living and to shift to organic coffee production because such a shift requires an adjustment time lag. Source: Meeting with Indigenous People in the state of Oaxaca March 1-5, 1992

THE LOSS OF THE ECONOMIC SURPLUS AND LACK OF CAPITAL FORMATION

Through integration into the global economy, Indigenous peoples throughout the world were subjected to similar historical processes that resulted in economic underdevelopment. Whether the trade was in slaves, silver, gold, silk, spices, timber, fish or fur, the expropriation and repatriation of the economic surplus by European mercantilists left these economies lacking in the finance capital necessary to produce wealth.

An understanding of the impact of this early integration of Indigenous economies into the world economy comes from an analysis based upon the concept of the economic surplus and how it is used. For illustrative purposes, this analysis will focus upon the development of underdevelopment through the fur trade in the northern parts of the Americas - our territories. It should be noted, however, that while this colonial experience varied from that of Indigenous peoples in other parts of the world, the "structural outcome" is similar because of the common experience of economic exploitation.

To begin, it can be taken as a given that an economic surplus was generated in the Hudson Bay region since the relationship would not have survived in the absence of profits. While profit was the motive for the Europeans, our ancestors were motivated by the access to European technology. Because the traders had items of value to our people, and because the lifestyle was compatible in that it was an extension of direct-use production, our people entered the relationship voluntarily. Once the process got underway, however, the element of compulsion increased.

Although the trade provided our people with the capital and consumer goods that they wanted, in terms of the long-term transformation of the economy, the impact was negative because very

little accumulation took place relative to our economies. The trade was characterized by profit outflows, and by the import of capital goods and most consumer goods. Production was for export and since the commodities involved were not self-reproducing given the scale of production, there was resource depletion. The structural consequences of the trade were such that the trade was not self-sustaining. This was an import/export economy with no basis for local capital accumulation. The exploited surplus went to Britain and France and no capital was accumulated as a result of 200 hundred years of Indigenous labour. Capital was, however, accumulated in Winnipeg and Montreal as well as in London and Paris:

In the fur trade, profits were accumulated very quickly. After costs, net income was either paid out partly in dividends to shareholders, and part of it was reinvested in the company. The Hudson's Bay Company was the first in the terms of a modern corporate structure: it was different structurally from the partnership of the British East India Company. From the beginning, the Company was a modern corporation and the first in the world; retained earnings were initiated by the Company. Overall, for the first 100 years, the profit rate on the original capital was 60% per year. This was a tremendous rate of capital expansion. The Company was very quickly doubling its profits, and is now the biggest merchant company in Canada. It has sales in excess of \$4 billion a year. It has taken over other companies, has subsidiary operations and huge real estate interests. (Rothney, 1975)

Generally, it is argued that some societies are poor because they lack capital stock, meaning that they are deficient in wealth-generating infrastructures: roads, communication systems, schools, factories and advanced technology. However, these theories fail to realize that the current availability of capital stock is the result of past investment decisions. Finance capital is created when the savings realized through increased productivity are invested for the purpose of creating more wealth. Whether such capital will produce further wealth is dependent upon how it is used. Critical to the process of wealth creation is the way these savings are used by the people who control them. When these savings are not productively reinvested, wealth will not be created. If a society is poor in capital stock, it is because those who controlled the wealth used it for something other than re-investment into wealth-producing structures. In underdeveloped countries, these savings usually are skimmed off by foreign capitalists and consumed by the local ruling elite, as was the case of the fur trade.

Since many Indigenous societies, most notably the ancient Aztec, Zapotec, Mayan and Inca civilizations, had accumulated much wealth over the course of their histories, their current state of impoverishment can only be understood as being the result of losing control of their economic surplus. Through the process of colonization, the wealth of these societies was drained off to enrich the colonizers and the western world. Initially, the accumulated wealth was simply plundered. When this was exhausted, the foreign capitalists and the local colonial elites began to appropriate the surplus generated through Indigenous labour, either through forced labour in the mines and plantations, or in the form of tribute and the production of cash crops. In more recent times, the surplus has been appropriated in the form of royalties, dividends, technical fees and interest payments. This process continues today: as is demonstrated by the fact that the amount of money leaving the developing world for the north is in excess of northern foreign investment and aid. This tends to be obscured by northern interests who prefer the prevalent myth of northern benevolence.

The history of Indigenous people everywhere has been one of underdevelopment through the appropriation of the economic surplus and unequal exchange in the marketplace. The experience of Indigenous peoples worldwide demonstrates that control of the economic surplus is critical for development, and that the appropriation of the surplus from one part of the world, and its investment in another area, will lead to underdevelopment in the one and development in the other.

Capitalists often argue, in justification of their role, that development does not take place when the surplus is left in the hands of the producers because of their propensity to consume rather than to save and invest. Because the social relations of production in precapitalist formations preclude capital accumulation, the surplus is in fact consumed. Historically in our territories, the consumption of surplus was institutionalized through such means as feasts, giveaways and the potlatch to ensure an equitable distribution of available resources. While it is true that such societies do not accumulate, it could be argued that by virtue of their participation in an externally generated trade relation, such societies were no longer precapitalist. In fact, social differentiation did take place as a result of the new economic relations. In the fur trade, differentiation took place among the producers in terms of the roles of trading captain, middlemen and porters. Differentiation also took place between men and women. So, it is not self-evident that the surplus would simply be consumed if left in the hands of the producers. Furthermore, even if it were consumed, the producers would at least have benefitted from their own labour.

Most importantly, the surplus left in the hands of the producers could have been re-invested for local benefit. The effects of foreign control of the surplus can be seen in the contemporary Indigenous economy. The fur trade economy developed as, and remained, an export driven economy. The unprocessed product was exported to Britain: very little secondary production processing took place locally. Furthermore, most consumption goods were imported. If the producers had retained the surplus, it could have been reinvested in secondary processing industries, thus providing additional sources of income. Also, the retained surplus could have been used to diversify the economy, which would have resulted in a greater capacity to respond to a changing economy. As it was, when the fur trade declined, our people were left on the margins of the emerging national economy.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ The history of Indigenous peoples everywhere has been one of underdevelopment through the appropriation of the economic surplus and unequal exchange in the marketplace.

Modernization

Western people have long regarded Indigenous societies as primitive, backward and generally inferior to modern societies. They usually see the relationship between Indigenous societies and the dominant society in terms of a "dual economy". This analysis is based upon the premise that the Indigenous economy is separate from the larger national economy. According to this theory, there are two economic sectors: one being the modern industrial/ technological/capitalist sector, the other being the traditional subsistence sector, untouched by capitalism. Each of these sectors

is supposed to possess its own largely separate and independent social and economic structures, and its own history and dynamic.

Westerners who subscribe to this theory tend to locate the source of Indigenous poverty in the persistence of traditional social and economic institutions and processes. The solution, therefore, is the expansion of the modern sector and the eventual absorption of the traditional sector, and a wholesale modernization of Indigenous societies. Indigenous people must become like westerners to survive and prosper. However, the history of Indigenous people demonstrates that their economies are only seemingly isolated, and that many of these areas were once the location of significant activity, producing large surpluses for the export sector. Rather than relative isolation being responsible for the lack of integration with the national economy and culture, it was the very early and total incorporation of Indigenous economies into the mercantilist world system that was the cause of impoverishment.

Our analysis of the impacts of modernization will focus on the role of government rather than the market. We have done this in order to separate those impacts that were the result of a particular mind set towards Indigenous peoples, from those impacts which were largely the unintended result of the integration into the production for exchange market.

Governments have seen their role as bringing civilization to primitive people and have directed their policies towards the modernization of:

- ▶ the Indigenous economy,
- ▶ the political institutions, and
- ▶ the Indigenous social structure and personality.

Government policy in our North American territories was usually framed in the context of doing what was best for our people in the long term, but always operated in the national interest. In some cases, policy was contradictory and had unintended positive outcomes. While the reserve system was not intended to maintain our identity, it has helped to preserve our traditional culture and our traditional economic lifestyle. It has also helped to maintain our social relationships and structures and provided an environment where the language has been maintained. The reserve system, although not intended to do so, has been a source of resistance to the forces of assimilation. While state policy in our territories was generally assimilationist, outside of North America state policies often sanctioned genocidal attacks on Indigenous people.

MODERNIZATION OF THE INDIGENOUS ECONOMY – TREATIES AND RESERVES

Throughout the territories in North America, government policy toward our people continued the process of economic underdevelopment already set in motion by market forces. The reserve system, the failure to provide adequate capital and technical assistance for the transition to an agricultural economy, the discouragement of traditional communal sharing practices, the promotion of private business development and wage labor, the encouragement of migration to

urban areas, the state regulation of natural resource use on treaty lands, the promotion of large-scale development projects that are in the national interest rather than in the interests of the local people, and the preference for welfare rather than economic development, all contributed to the continued impoverishment of our people. The implementation of these policies impacted not only on our economy, but also on our social structures, our identity, and the spiritual foundations of our culture.

The reserve system represented a contradiction in government policy. While the overall policy of government was assimilationist in nature, the intent of the reserve system was to isolate our people from the emerging national society. The government of the day apparently saw the reserves as places where traditional lifestyles and identity could be maintained away from the corrupting influence of the larger society. Perhaps this was the reason for their failure to make available the necessary capital and technical assistance to facilitate the transition to an agricultural economy, even though our ancestors successfully negotiated the inclusion of these provisions in the treaties.

Whatever the rationale for the reserve system may have been, the effect was further impoverishment. In many cases, the lands set aside for reserves were insufficient for a growing population. Often this was the case because government failed to allocate all the lands that our ancestors were entitled to under the treaties. In fact, many of these treaty land entitlement claims are still outstanding today. Additionally, most reserves were located on barren and unproductive land unsuitable for gardening or other agricultural activities.

The reserve system severely constrained the ability of our people to meet their needs through the subsistence economy. Although the market economy had reduced the importance of subsistence production, it was not destroyed and in fact subsidized commercial production. With the loss of the cash economy, many of our people returned to subsistence production to meet their survival needs. However, although the treaties had guaranteed continued access to ceded lands for hunting and gathering, increasing restrictions through government regulations and the expansion of agricultural settlement made such livelihood difficult to sustain. Those of our people who continue to hunt and fish according to their traditional conservation practices are criminalized when found to be in violation of government regulations.

Where the distribution of the surplus had been institutionalized through traditional give-aways, feasts and potlatches, the government saw fit to pass legislation making these activities illegal. This discouraged communal sharing and encouraged our people to be concerned solely with the needs of their nuclear families. The nuclearization of our families was completed by the state's extensive use of welfare as a subsistence strategy. Because such payments are assigned to families on the basis of private rather than community need, this individual dependency on relief helped to undercut shared responsibility within communities and extended families.

Governments further impoverished our economies through the creation of large-scale development projects on our traditional lands. Because this issue is central to this report, it will be dealt with in a following section.

With the decline of the fur trade in our territories and the beginning of industrial development,

our people were further marginalized by the erection of institutional barriers to participation in the wage-labor economy, even to racism. Many of our people, who had been forced to leave their traditional territories, found that there was no place for them in mainstream society. Where our people have been integrated into the wage-labor economy, it has been at the bottom of the social ladder. When our people are forced into the wage economy, they usually remain unemployed; when they are able to find work, it is mostly unskilled and low paying.

The introduction of a wage-labor economy has not only failed to provide employment to our people, it has had a devastating impact on our subsistence economy and on our society generally. Industrial development on or near our lands has failed to achieve the benefits of modernization and has instead increased social problems.

Often, people were forced to leave their reserves and rural communities to search out employment and services not available in their home territories. For those of our people who migrated to the cities, it can be seen that the roots of urbanization go back to the earliest contact period. Parallels can be made between our southern and northern brothers and sisters in this regard. We should point out that, since all lands were populated prior to the coming of the Europeans, some Indigenous people living in urban areas are the descendents of the original people and are, therefore, living in their traditional territories. Notwithstanding this fact, large North American urban populations were created as a result of government policy designed to encourage people to relocate for education and employment opportunities. Additionally, our people have been driven from their home communities by housing shortages and the lack of the basic physical amenities in housing, by environmental degradation and violence, and the need for medical services. Indigenous people forced from their home territories should be considered "refugees" because they are fleeing for reasons that are similar to those that displace people in other areas: violence, environmental degradation, loss of the traditional livelihood and the lack of alternative economic opportunities.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ While the overall policy of government was assimilationist in nature, the intent of the reserve system was to isolate our people from the emerging national society.

² Where our people have been integrated into the wage-labour economy, it has been at the bottom of the social ladder.

MODERNIZATION OF THE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

At the time the treaties were developed, our ancestors did not see themselves giving up their right to govern themselves in their own territories. The colonial government took the position that, by signing the treaties, our nations had given up their sovereignty and had agreed to come under the political authority of the colonial government. An administrative apparatus was established with "cradle to grave" authority over the lives of our people. Indian agents were installed on every reserve and quasi-governments were created to adhere to and implement the decisions of the Indian-agent administration. Our nations became internal colonies.

The displacement of the traditional governing system contributed greatly to the impoverishment of our societies. Prior to the coming of the Europeans, our nations had a system of government that ensured that all the needs of the people were met. Under our system, there was no poverty,

unemployment or welfare.

In order to ensure access to the land, governments set out to destroy the traditional forms of governance and to forestall any initiative for independent political action. Traditional governments are characterized by the collective ownership of all lands, waterways, forests and wildlife, full participation and consensus in decision-making, and non-coercive leadership. These were perceived as standing in opposition to western forms of government which are based upon private ownership of land and productive wealth, representative politics, majority rule decision-making, and centralized, hierarchal leadership. Therefore, it had to be dismantled. To achieve its goals of assimilation and to ensure that Indigenous peoples did not stand in the way of land and resource exploitation, government purposely moved to dismantle our traditional government and install a compliant leadership on every reserve. The reserve system and the rigid federal trusteeship removed all powers of self-determination. The Indian agents were the source of authority on every reserve, and the pass law was used to control the movement of our people, thus preventing organized resistance.

While our ancestors found themselves in the position of being forced to acquiesce to the demands of the government of the day, our current leadership faces the challenge of righting the wrongs of the past, exercising the power rightly accorded to us as the first people of the land and most importantly, accomplishing this within the framework of our own political reality. It must be said that there is the fear that our leadership has lived too long and too closely within mainstream systems and because of this, may avoid the more difficult challenge of true self-government and may simply don the cloak of the mainstream. If this occurs, we will not be self-governing: we will simply be exercising powers of self-administration. This will complete the process of assimilation that began many years ago. The colonized will have become the colonizer.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ Traditional governments are characterized by the collective ownership of all lands, waterways, forest and wildlife, full participation and consensus in decision-making, and non-coercive leadership.

MODERNIZATION OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND INDIGENOUS PERSONALITY

The Attack on Indigenous Spirituality

Spirituality - our relationship to our Mother Earth - formed the foundation of our traditional cultures. Therefore the destruction of the traditional world view was a precondition to modernizing or civilizing the Indian and our traditional economies, political institutions and our social structure. Government and the churches began a concerted effort to sever our people from their sacred beliefs and hence their relationship to the earth and all of creation.

Through federal legislation, traditional ceremonies such as the sun dance, giveaways, potlatches and traditional medicines and healing were outlawed. Our spiritual leaders were under constant surveillance by the Indian agents and the police force, and were denigrated and persecuted by the missionaries from the various churches in operation in our communities. Often, ceremonies were

interrupted and shut down, and the participants arrested, jailed and/or fined. Many of the sacred objects that had been passed down from generation to generation - sacred pipes, rattles, drums, masks and medicine bundles - were seized by the police and never returned. Today, many of these sit in museums for the benefit and pleasure of the public and attempts at reclaiming them have failed.

In spite of the brutal assault upon our people, our children, our families, and our culture, we have refused to vanish, to assimilate and to abandon our culture. Our spiritual leaders and medicine people went underground to protect the ceremonies and the traditional medicine, and the ceremonies continued in defiance of government legislation and policy. As the repression began to ease in the 1950s with changes to the Indian Act, the ceremonies and medicine people emerged intact. Our traditional healers began to practice their knowledge and skills openly, and mainstream medical professionals have had to admit that traditional practices are just as valid as western medicine and in some cases are more effective.

The strength of our culture is attested to by the very fact of its survival in the face of an unrelenting and massive assault. Government and the church have never been able to totally suppress or eradicate our culture despite repeated and varied attempts to do so. It should be pointed out that the time of contact is a relatively short period of time in the history of our people, a history that goes back thousands of years. The intense repression only spans some 150 years, and although severe, has not been sufficient to obliterate the foundations of our culture. The people entrusted to carry the songs, the prayers, the ceremonies, the medicines, and the sacred pipes have been able to bring them safely through that dark period.

In the past four decades, there has been a widespread move to reclaim our culture - the languages, the customs, the spiritual beliefs and ceremonies, and the traditional ways of healing and of educating our children. Increasingly, our people, especially our youth are reclaiming those original ways, understandings and relationships and are making them a vital force in their lives. Recently, there has been a move to come to terms with the effects of the residential school experience and to demand accountability from the churches and the government for their role in that situation.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ The strength of our culture is attested to by the very fact of its survival in the face of an unrelenting and massive assault.

The Devaluation of Indigenous Knowledge and Practices

The issue of Indigenous knowledge is central to this paper because of its relation to sustainable societies and will be dealt with more extensively in a following section. Since the devaluation of such knowledge is one process of impoverishment, we will deal with it in this section as well.

It should be noted that Indigenous knowledge was critical to the European traders and colonists in their first years on these continents. Because of their unfamiliarity with the new lands, Europeans were dependent upon the knowledge of our ancestors for their very survival. This was especially true for the northern parts of the Americas because of the severity of the winters. If our people had not taken pity on them, none would have survived their first winters. In many of

the American colonies, even with the assistance of Indigenous peoples, many colonists perished. Years passed before the surviving colonists were able to establish self-sufficiency in their new environment. In areas where a trade relationship developed, our ancestors' knowledge and skills were essential to the successful trade in natural products. The trade was an extension of direct-use production, and our peoples used their extensive knowledge of the land, the plants, the animals, and the navigation systems to harvest the products desired by the Europeans. The use of Indigenous technology in the trade reduced the costs of production for the Europeans, thereby making the trade even more profitable.

Over time, many aspects of our ancestors' knowledge and skills were integrated into European practices, especially in terms of agricultural products and methods, the harvesting of wild animals and plants, and the use of many different kinds of traditional medicines. Usually, the source of these innovations were very quickly forgotten by the colonists, and became part of the new Canadian or American way of life.

As the European settlers consolidated their presence in the new lands and as the trade declined in importance, our people and their knowledge and traditional skills became less valuable. At this point, the colonists began concerted campaigns to assimilate our ancestors to the European way of life. No longer of any value to them, the traditional ways increasingly became seen as primitive and as a barrier to the successful assimilation of our peoples into the new society.

Missionaries and Residential Schools

Attempts at modernization have taken the form of aggressive efforts to deculturalize Indigenous children initially through residential schools and continuing with the modern education system. Many of our people have had their children removed from their homes against their will and subjected to intensive deculturalization and assimilation into the European value-system and lifestyle. Although the colonial governments in Canada adopted many and varied methods of assimilating our people, the separation of children from their families and their culture through the residential school system became a primary means of assimilation. That the church shared this common agenda proved to be very expedient for the federal government. The unholy alliance of church and state proved to be a formidable force in the destruction of the traditional way of life.

In the earliest years of French settlement in New France, the residential schools were usually small informal institutions set up by individual christian missionaries or small missionary teams. In the late 1870s the Catholic Church established industrial schools under the direction of the federal government and with federal funding. During the heyday of the residential school system between 1883 and 1969, the federal government and the churches, including the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and the United and Presbyterian Churches, were active in establishing a network of these institutions. At its height the residential school system totalled 80 schools. In the Atlantic region, there was only one, Quebec had a few, and Ontario had several, but the greatest concentration was in the west - the prairies, British Columbia and the north. There were 13 residential schools in Manitoba and slightly more than one half of these were operated by the Catholic Church. During this period, competition between schools seeking to increase their student numbers for funding purposes, added to the fragmentation at the reserve

level as people adhered to different faiths. (Miller, 1990)

The financing of residential schools involved joint church and government contributions since government grants alone were insufficient to meet the full costs of these institutions. Financing became a more critical issue as the numbers of children dealt with in the residential schools grew. In many cases, the schools operated under the half-day school system where children spent half of the day in school and the other half working about the school and its property. The operation of these schools was actually subsidized by the children themselves, since their free labour was used to reduce the operating costs. Often, such activities took precedence over vocational and academic instruction and many times, children were used as a cheap labour pool for local farmers. In addition to such flagrant economic exploitation, a large part of the instruction provided to the children was religious training aimed at removing Indigenous traditions and forcing them to adopt skills and attitudes appropriate to the white world. This was largely ineffective and, in general, students left the residential schools, usually at the age of fifteen or sixteen, without adequate educational preparation. (Miller, 1990)

This separation of children from their families and culture was a deliberate means by which to ensure successful assimilation. Children as young as six and seven were removed from their homes and not returned for months at a time. In some cases, children were away at school for years, not even allowed to return for holidays. Coupled with the abuses that occurred in the schools, such separation had a devastating impact on both the children and their families. In effect, residential schools represented impenetrable barriers to the normal currents of affiliation and affection between children and their families, and became a breeding ground for future inmates of jails and institutions. Residential schools as a means of controlling Indigenous children became the initial phase of an institutionalization process that later included jails and other correctional institutions. (Falconer, Morrissette and McKenzie, 1991)

As an instrument of church and state colonialism, residential schools represented a massive assault on the spiritual, cultural, social, physical, sexual, psychological, mental and emotional well-being of those who were exposed to it, and encompassed all successive generations of our people as well. Even people who were not students at any of the schools suffered the results of this inhumane and failed attempt to assimilate our peoples. These attempts to assimilate have had far reaching and profound effects on our people and culture. The living conditions, the educational achievements, the high rate of suicide, alcoholism and chemical abuse, family violence, chronic over involvement with the child welfare and criminal justice system, as well sexual, physical, and emotional abuse are all symptoms of a much larger pattern of abuse. The destruction of the family unit and traditional child-rearing practices, the fragmentation of the communities and the cycle of sexual, physical and emotional abuse that finds its roots in the residential school as sanctioned by the federal government, has furthered dependency and can best be described as an "abuse of power". (Falconer, Morrissette and McKenzie, 1991)

Side Bar Notes: ¹ Attempts at modernization have taken the form of aggressive efforts to deculturalize Indigenous children initially through residential schools and continuing with the modern education system.

² Residential schools as a means of controlling Indigenous children became the initial phase of an institutionalization process that later included jails and other correctional institutions.

Artificial Legal Distinctions

Federal legislation has drawn artificial divisions among our people. Following policies designed to compartmentalize relationships among Indigenous peoples, the Indian Act divided our people according to legal distinctions. The federal government assumed responsibility for those deemed status, treaty or non-treaty. The label non-status designated people who had lost their status for one reason or another, and were therefore no longer the responsibility of government. People referred to as “Bill C-31” are people who have had their status returned as a result of amendments to the Indian Act. The designation Metis implied either descendents of the original Red River Metis nation, or more generally, a person of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry. Half-breed was the label which historically referred to those whose European ancestry was Scottish/English rather than French. Although early federal legislation made provisions for land and language rights for the Metis, the federal government did not assume responsibility for this group of people.

A strong evaluative component ranks a person’s status making those who are status/treaty/non-treaty the “real” Indigenous peoples. Under this ranking system, nonstatus people have less legitimacy, those labelled “Bill C-31” are often held in contempt and Metis are sometimes dismissed as not Indigenous at all. This ranking operates in the external, non-indigenous society, but finds its most virulent expressions within Indigenous societies. Among some Indigenous peoples, primarily those who are status, treaty, nontreaty and on-reserve, these legal labels have been internalized to such a degree that they devalue other Indigenous people who cannot be described in these ways.

Although our people are divided by the Indian Act, their legal status is not the primary determinant of their identity. Simply delegating people to a particular legal category does not really provide much useful information about the identity of that person. This is the case because:

...the compartmentalized designations and the legal characteristics that are given to our people are not ones that we have chosen, but are a byproduct of our relationship with the government of this country. The categories which do provide more information are those which convey information about their values and their lifestyles. The Indigenous identity or nature, can be best understood according to a continuum from traditional at one end, through neo-traditional, to nontraditional at the other end. These variations are the result of 500 years of occupation, tribal differences and...the development of Indigenous culture alongside of mainstream culture. (Morrissette, 1991)

These varying identities are expressions of aboriginality and reflect the individual’s values, beliefs and lifestyles. Thus, it can be seen that legal status and culture are not the same. This dimension has important implications for sustainable development.

*Side Bar Note:*¹ *The legal characteristics that are given to our people are not ones that we have chosen, but are a byproduct of our relationship with the government of this country.*

Consumerism and Individualism

The continuum suggested above can be seen as a reflection of the degrees of assimilation of our people. As our people were exposed to mainstream culture through the coercive forces outlined previously, it was inevitable that they would adopt some of the characteristics of the mainstream culture. This occurred largely through the process of indoctrination and often led to the alienation of our people from their communities and their families. Where the children of the residential school experience returned to their home communities, they often found that the values they had been forced to adopt did not fit with the values of their own community. Where the church and the state ripped away the spiritual and cultural practices of our people through religion and the education system, they were replaced with the lessons of the mainstream culture.

As a result of the different churches vying for their flocks, competition was becoming a way of life for our people. The ideologies of the church seemed to be saying that one religion was better than another and by virtue of this, one person could be better than another. The educational system separated our children into grades or levels that suggested again, that the higher level was the more informed or intelligent level. Competition was promoted in academics and sports, pitting one child against the other. All of this went against the teachings that were fundamental to Indigenous nature.

As our children came to be more and more integrated into the western world, they adopted many mainstream habits. While the residential school system had gone a long way in disrupting the extended family system and replacing it with the nuclear family structure, the exposure to consumer goods and the mass media further contributed to the adoption of individualism and consumerism. However, because most of our people were living on the edges of poverty, they became further marginalized and alienated since there was no real way to give effect to these newfound habits. The way that this most often found reflection was through self-abasement and the minimization of self, family and community. This loss of confidence was the logical outcome of living in a society that measured happiness and well-being in terms of material possessions. Our young people especially could not help but blame themselves and their people for not measuring up to such an ideal. Given that most Indigenous people have been victims of the residential school system, and have all lived and been exposed to the mainstream culture for quite some time, the habits and the perceptions of self in a consumer-oriented, individualistic society, have had an irresistible impact.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ The exposure to consumer goods and the mass media further contributed to the adoption of individualism and consumerism.

Environmental and Social Degradation due to Destructive Development Schemes

As a result of colonization, Indigenous peoples have been pushed to the fringes of mainstream society. Now, because of the unabated and increasing demands of western consumer societies, the colonizers have come back to claim the fringe as well. Indigenous lands throughout the world have been under siege from the so-called development forces – resource companies and complicit governments.

Indigenous peoples have been destroyed by development. Traditional lands have been subject to a range of ‘development’ activities including hydro electric and irrigation dams, clear-cut logging, pulp and paper mills, mining and recreation projects. Hydro-electric projects throughout Indigenous territories have destroyed huge areas that were once our traditional hunting and fishing territories. Mercury leaching from the submerged shoreline has made commercial or subsistence fishing dangerous; many people living in proximity to these projects suffer from mercury poisoning. The quality of water is in serious question as more and more of these projects are under construction and in the planning stages. In Canada, particularly in the Hudson’s Bay region, the James Bay Cree are fighting to halt the destructive forces of the second phase of the James Bay hydro-electric project. Indigenous people and all Canadians face the additional threat of massive diversions of fresh water to the United States. While the James Bay hydro-electric project may have been the ‘project of the century’, the great canal project, and other water diversion projects, are likely to be the projects of the 21st century given the growing water crisis in the American southwest. Actually, water projects for irrigation, drinking water or energy are the most critical issues faced by Indigenous people around the world.

These projects are initiated by governments and resource development corporations, and do not in any way benefit Indigenous people. The traditional way of life is permanently disrupted; social relations are altered; and family systems break down. Suicides and other violent deaths become common occurrences. Entire communities have been forced to relocate to other less desirable areas. Such development disrupts and displaces Indigenous people, pollutes the land, air and water, and destroys the traditional economy. Conditions for Indigenous people are worsened because they are unable to earn a livelihood from their traditional lands and resources and do not gain employment from the new projects.

Under such conditions, Indigenous people have only two options: they can leave their homes in search of employment or they can turn to welfare. Many such environmental refugees do not find employment in urban or other areas and are required to depend on welfare for their livelihood.

For too long, Indigenous peoples have had such “development” imposed on our lands. Indigenous territories share much in common with Third World countries in this regard. Tribal lands represent the last frontier – the few remaining lands not previously ‘developed’. For example, in the United States, 65% of known uranium deposits, 35% of strippable coal and 5% of natural gas are located on reservations or treaty lands. In addition to massive dams, mines and logging operations, increasingly, the industrialized world is turning to indigenous communities and the so-called developing world to accept its garbage for disposal.

Not only is this not development, it is underdevelopment – not only do Indigenous people not benefit in any way from such projects, but the traditional economy is destroyed, sacred sites are destroyed, medicines are lost, fish are poisoned, waterways are made unnavigable and hunting areas become inaccessible. Such ‘development’ permanently alters the ability of Indigenous peoples to continue to live on the land. On top of this, the compensation that was promised is either not delivered or is inadequate. Since project-related employment is either minimal or nonexistent, and traditional economic activities no longer possible, people are forced into

income-security programs where they are treated with contempt as “welfare bums” and burdens to society.

While it is relatively easy for northern peoples to understand and accept the impact of such “development” on Indigenous peoples in Central and South American, or other Third World countries for that matter, they are apparently incapable of recognizing the same forces at work in North America. In recognition of this, some people have referred to northern Canada as “the Brazil of the North”. The Aboriginal Rights Coalition, which is composed of the major churches in Canada, has said that,

Distance brings morality into focus...as the 1980s came to a close, the attention of Canadians was increasingly drawn to events in the Amazon rainforest of Brazil. The efforts of resource developers, enthusiastically supported by the government to open up regions of uncharted rainforests were being monitored with growing concern. Attention was directed at the environmental degradation resulting from the clear-cutting of the rainforest from the destruction of river ecosystems following the construction of dams for hydroelectric purposes, and from the pollution caused by mining and other industrial activities. Attention was also focused on the impacts of these so-called development activities on the Indigenous people of the region: the introduction of new diseases, the loss of their traditional land base, the rapid decline in their ability to pursue traditional activities and to control their own destiny...While our media may be more reluctant to identify the patterns, or render moral judgement about the players, a major assault is also underway in Canada against the remaining lands still being used in traditional ways to sustain Aboriginal people. This assault, spanning the northern parts of the provinces from British Columbia to Labrador, is comparable in every way with the patterns prevalent in the Brazilian rainforest: in scale; in the role played by giant resource companies; in the active support provided by federal and provincial governments; in the devastating impact of these activities on the physical environment; and in the negative, sometimes genocidal, consequences for the Indigenous population. (Aboriginal Rights Coalition 1991)

Although all land is considered sacred by traditional Indigenous peoples, some lands, including ceremonial and burial sites, have special spiritual significance. These areas should never be “developed” although many have been destroyed by so-called western “development” projects. Where such areas remain and/or can be recovered, they must be left intact and used for their original purposes. Other lands are available for sustainable development. Indigenous peoples have never been against all development. Indeed, traditional livelihoods are based upon land and resource use. However, such use must not be destructive, and must ensure the viability of the land and resources for seven generations into the future.

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² Indigenous peoples have been destroyed by development.

³ Resource use must not be destructive, and must ensure that viability of the land and resources for seven generations into the future.

The Marginalization of Women and Youth

Indigenous women and their children have been adversely affected by the processes of impoverishment in very specific ways. Historically, women occupied a central role in production, a role that was different from but equal to that of men. To a degree there was a sexual division of labour, but this did not result in a devaluation of their role. Women were not the primary caregivers to their children nor to the elderly and the sick, as these were communal responsibilities. While the men were responsible for the hunt, including the production of necessary tools, the tasks of secondary processing fell to the women. In addition to food preparation and preservation, and the production of clothing and other essentials, women were responsible for producing their own technology. Women also had primary responsibility for the gathering of foods and medicines – plants, berries, roots and herbs, and were also responsible for some of the fishing. In agricultural communities, women were largely responsible for the communal gardens including seed selection, cultivation and harvesting. Gathering fuel and water were also tasks that fell to women.

Women's role in production demanded an extensive knowledge of the local environment, a knowledge they had learned from their mothers and grandmothers. Women were responsible for transmitting this knowledge to the female children of the community, and the children were expected to participate in production to the degree that they were able. Children had significant leisure time, as did all members of the group, but they were not outside of the productive process. A significant part of women's knowledge related to "famine foods" which were foods that could be used in times of severe food shortages, even though they were not part of the regular food supply. Women's knowledge and skills were especially critical when the hunt or the crops failed to produce adequate food for the group. For all of these reasons, the work of women was seen as vital to the survival of the group and not lesser value.

The introduction of production for exchange into direct-use economies degraded the position of women. In areas where a trade relationship developed, such as in the northern parts of the Americas, women's labour was re-organized to meet the demands of production for the market. Women's commercial activities were an extension of their direct-use production since the same knowledge and skills were called upon. Whereas under the pre-commercial economic system, women's labour had benefited the larger social group, with the introduction of commodity relations, "women's labour power began to be subordinated to the commercial interests of both Indigenous and European men." (Champagne, 1982) The change in women's economic role led to a degradation in their social role, and the gradual adoption of patriarchal social relations set the stage for the widespread abuse that was to follow.

The use of alcohol by European traders impacted on the health and well-being of women and children. Not only did food consumption decrease because men were spending more of their cash income on alcohol purchases, and less time in hunting and fishing pursuits, but the increasing use of alcohol and the acceptance of patriarchal values by men resulted in violence against women and children.

The dispossession from the land further impoverished women and children who were the most dependent on the land for survival. Prior to the imposition of the reserve system, women had

access to a variety of natural foods and other products through the seasonal migration within their territories. The confinement to reserves reduced access to these other areas and resulted in a decrease in consumption and the beginning of resource depletion in the immediate reserve area. Among agricultural peoples, increasing state control and privatization of land reduced the extent of the village commons. This had especially severe implications for the health and well-being of women and their children because it was they who were most dependent on the commons for survival.

The status of women and children was transformed as a result of changes to the nature and locus of production. In our territories, when the economy changed from one based on trade to one based on agriculture, men were displaced from the productive process. After two hundred years of integration into the cash economy, men had become dependent on that way of life. Their sudden unemployment and irrelevance had serious economic and psychological impacts. Although many continued to provide for their families through the subsistence economy, especially hunting and fishing, this did not occupy them fully. Additionally, the lack of cash incomes denied men access to the consumer goods on which they had become dependent.

Added to the loss traditional lands and self-determination as a result of the treaties, the reserve system and federal trusteeship, and the increasing authority of missionaries, the loss of their economic role had a devastating impact on Indigenous men. Alcoholism and violence became widespread. Women now had to contend with the debilitating effects of male alcoholism along with providing for their families in an increasingly depleted physical environment. Over time, the pressures led to a massive breakdown in the family structure.

As Indigenous communities ceased to be economically viable, and as social instability increased as a result, women and their children migrated to urban areas in search of employment and improved living conditions. Single parent mothers and their children form the largest proportion of urban populations today, in part as the result of migration. Women and their children should be considered to be refugees because they have left their homes, not by choice, but because they are fleeing violence in their homelands.

In attempting to make the transition to the wage labour economy, women have faced formidable barriers. Women have difficulty entering the labour force at all because they are usually single parents with young dependent children and lack access to affordable childcare. Often, women migrants are alone in cities and cannot, therefore, rely upon their extended families to care for their children while they work. They also face discrimination both as women and as Indigenous people. They are discriminated against by employers and lending institutions and are denied access to education and training opportunities. For many Indigenous women, welfare is the only recourse; and when they are also denied access to welfare, prostitution and the fur trade are the only remaining sources of livelihood.

The status of women was transformed as result of missionaries, residential schools and government policy. Missionaries sought to dismantle the power and authority of women consistent with their own European and church driven views on the status of women. In some respects, the roots of violence against women can be traced to the missionaries early admonishments to Indigenous men to use physical force where necessary to ensure the

compliance of women. Residential schools were created to remove the influence of mothers and grandmothers who were the primary agents for the intergenerational transmission of culture. Governments also diminished the status of Indigenous women in many ways, including the notorious provisions of federal legislation which denied status to many women and children.

The status of women in the political sphere was degraded as a result of integration into the market economy. Although traditionally women enjoyed an equal social and political status because of their position in production, they were marginalized as a result of integration into the market economy and men's acceptance of western social relations and political processes. As a result, Indigenous women today have to struggle against sexism within male-dominated political structures, in addition to struggling with men for social justice and self-determination.

The status of women finds reflection in gender differences in the efforts to protect the environment. Women tend to be at the forefront of the struggle against destructive development schemes because often their very survival depends on maintaining the integrity of the land and the forests. In the Mohawk community of Kahnasatake, women took the initiative to set up a road block to protect their traditional forest from being destroyed for golf course. The forest was seen as critical to the cultural survival of their people; not only was it a source of food and fuel, it was one of the few remaining sources of medicinal plants and also contained their traditional burial grounds. In the Himalayan foothills, tribal and other rural women have joined forces with the men to protect their forests from commercial exploitation, but in other instances, have had to oppose the positions taken by the men because of different priorities relative to resource use. Whereas men are usually supportive of projects that involve the harvesting of trees because of their interests in cash cropping, women consistently opt to leave the forests intact since it is their only local source of fuel and forest products. Women have been successful differences in replanting schemes: women tend to prefer the trees that have traditionally provided fuel, fodder and other survival needs, while the men have typically preferred commercially profitable varieties.

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³ Women tend to be at the forefront of the struggle against destructive development schemes because often their very survival depends on maintaining the integrity of the land and the forests.

Other Indigenous Views: Marginalization of Women in India Parallels can be seen in the experience of tribal women in other areas with the introduction of production for the market. A similar sexual division of labour in these societies resulted in the marginalization of women and their female children with the change in the nature of the economy. Colonial policies were such that it was the men who came to form the labour force for the large agricultural plantations, and it was the men who were supported by the state to engage in cash-crop production. When men began producing cash crops, or left the villages for employment on plantations in urban areas, the women had to assume the responsibilities of the men in domestic production. Because of their increasingly marginalized status in the economy, and because the exodus of men from the rural areas left women as the sole providers for their families, the introduction of production for

exchange significantly undermined the health and well-being of women and their children. The shift to the production of cash crops displaced subsistence agriculture and led to malnutrition, especially among women and children. The best land closest to the villages was often appropriated by men for cash crops, leaving only the more distant and marginal lands for subsistence agriculture. Having to travel extended distances to tend to their crops extended the women's working day and put extra pressure on already scarce resources. The increasing use of marginal lands for food production depleted the fertility of the soil and reduced the quantity and the quality of the food available for consumption. This along with gender differences in food distribution led to higher levels of malnutrition among women and their female children.

Source: Bina Agarwal, 1992

² *Tribal Women in India The devaluation of Indigenous knowledge has impacted especially severely on women. An assessment of the circumstances of tribal women in India has found that: development strategies make no attempt to acknowledge or enhance women's extensive knowledge of the resource base; women are excluded from the institutions which create and transmit modern scientific knowledge; and the increasing degradation of the land and increasing privatization and statization is destroying the materials basis for women's ecological knowledge.*

ABORIGINAL YOUTH: CULTURE AND EMPOWERMENT

During the period of rapid development, particularly towards the end of the 19th Century in North America, the inability of the emerging social order to effectively accommodate indigenous youth became a matter of growing social concern. For most of the population, indigenous youth was – and still is – considered a problem rather than a victim of its social environment. The following case study draws on the experience of Winnipeg indigenous youth to present a healing and empowering approach built on indigenous culture and youth participation.

Approximately 60% of the Aboriginal population in Manitoba is under the age of 25 as compared to rate of 40% for the non-Aboriginal population. Unemployment is four times the rate for all youth... school drop-out rates are extremely high – less than 20% complete high school. Findings also suggest that only 15% of youth not attending school are employed, and most of these are working in unstable, low-paying jobs. Particular groups of Aboriginal groups are vulnerable. For example, young Aboriginal women are four times more likely than their non-Aboriginal counterparts to become single parents and to face related social and economic “disadvantage”. One out of every 24 Aboriginal children or youth are apprehended by child welfare authorities, nearly three times the rate for non-Aboriginals. Family violence and child abuse are widespread problems, and the cycle of abuse is too often repeated by Aboriginal youth. Seventy percent of Aboriginal young people are incarcerated at least once before they reach the age of 24, and are four times more likely than other youth to commit suicide.

These indicators reflect the symptoms of underdevelopment facing Aboriginal people which have been shaped by internal colonialism, institutional racism and cultural disintegration, and despite increased awareness of the importance of culture and self-identity, conventional services and programs have been slow to incorporate more than a tokenistic appreciation of these issues. Aboriginal youth are particularly disempowered

because they are disorganized and do not have an effective mechanism to represent their own understanding of common needs, problems and preferred solutions.

Two general principles have guided the development of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Youth Program: Aboriginal culture and its relationship to healing as a prerequisite to youth empowerment, and the priority attached to the participation of Aboriginal youth. Aboriginal culture involves the use of traditions as an active component in the development of both personal and political dimensions to self-identity. Knowledge of traditions and the historical treatment of these by the dominant society is used to develop both consciousness about culture of origin and the impact of colonialism as those relate to current Aboriginal realities. Thus, cultural programming becomes both a central component of healing and an active ingredient in promoting social and political change. These two principles led to an approach which is both restorative and empowering as youth are encouraged to take not only more responsibility for their own development, but also increased collective responsibility to help others and to promote political and institutional change. This approach to healing is operationalized in two essential ways. First, there is a strong attachment to the “lodge” which at its most generic level is the centre or point from which an Aboriginal nation begins to socially construct its relationship with Creation. Traditional lodges, then, are central to the development of an Aboriginal meaning of life and key sources of Aboriginal identities, and within this tradition elders are important as teachers and healers. A second important operating guideline to the development of positive identity involves the notion of balance. Colonization led to the weakening of traditional social, economic and political systems. For too many Aboriginal youth, coping has involved substance abuse, poor educational achievement, unemployment, crime and experience with family violence as both victims and perpetrators. Intervention with youth must involve both the elimination or reduction of these destructive coping mechanisms and the restoration of balance by replacing these with a positive individual and group identity. When combined with conventional knowledge and education, Aboriginal traditions and teachings become instrumental in forming new, more constructive ways of coping for Aboriginal youth. Thus, the search for truth and a response to contemporary problems and issues includes the search for balance in a new relationship with the Creator and Mother Earth.

There are several goals related to these principles which serve to guide the service model adopted by the Youth Support Program. First, while the concept of healing all aspects of one's being is central to programming spiritual healing requires special attention, reflecting the fact that the spiritual aspect of the Aboriginal identity has suffered most dramatically. Secondly, programs developed for Aboriginal youth must be designed to respond to all aspects of need, including the need for income and shelter. Thirdly, cultural teachings and knowledge must be fully integrated into all program components, and traditional knowledge must be utilized to help organize personal and social relationships, as well as political structures and processes. Fourthly, programs must be planned to incorporate both personal healing and community development objectives. However, sufficient progress is required before developmental objectives can be fully realized. Finally, specific social work services require the incorporation of traditional cultural teaching as a central aspect of helping.

Program components include participation in feasts and ceremonies, involvement in social and political issues, especially those concerning the abuse of women and children, youth assemblies and the “New Directions” personal development training sessions. Major accomplishments of the program has included the development of the Children of the Earth High School, based upon the Aboriginal culture, the judicial interim release program, a youth employment cooperative and the most recent initiative – the Bear Clan patrol which engages in street patrols and responds to requests for specific intervention, particularly in relation to domestic violence, and is governed by a steering Committee of inner city Aboriginal women.

All programs at the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre are still quite new, but the early experience demonstrates success both in engaging and empowering Aboriginal youth through a strategy which incorporates Aboriginal culture and traditions as a method of change. In this approach, cultural knowledge and traditions are more than a means to self-identity for personal growth and change; they are an active force in the promotion of community change, including the development of new institutional responses which reflect contemporary adaptations to traditional systems, and changes within existing Aboriginal organizations. (McKenzie and Morrissette, 1992)

Well-Being of Current and Future Generations

The Context of Well-Being for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous People

Indigenous people are at the crossroads of extinction as a culture and as people. We are the carriers of knowledge linking us back to our responsibility to the earth, and we are the signpost pointing the direction to the health and healing of the planet. If this knowledge becomes lost to humankind, then it is entirely possible that our time will run out. There is every indication of this today.

To arrest the process of global destruction and to ensure the well-being of current and future generations, we must all be prepared to recognize our complicity and to be prepared for an active role in repairing the damage already perpetrated on the planet. We believe this means first having recognition, that the way in which we have perceived the world and our relationship to it, has some major and significant flaws. Admitting this will mean changing the way that we treat the earth. We can no longer accept half measures from the technological and industrial sector with respect to the polluting and destruction of the eco-system. We must re-conceptualize our ideas on the quality of life that incorporate the health of the planet as the primary goal rather than the satisfaction of material wants that go hand in hand with the accumulation of wealth and uninterrupted expansion and exploitation of the gifts of the earth. Governments must take bold steps to stop the large corporations from their headlong flight into global destruction. The same governments must be prepared to be a part of the educational process, aimed at the general population, the private sector and the global economy. Jointly, they must honestly and pointedly

tell where we are in terms of the damage that has already been done and what we all must do, what we must sacrifice to reclaim the health of the planet. And most importantly we believe that there is a responsibility and a necessity to promote the strengthening and re-building of the last vestiges of sustainable societies – the Indigenous culture.

If we might be so bold, just as we remind ourselves of the atrocities of the holocaust to ensure we do not perpetrate such an event again, we must maintain the Indigenous culture and teachings to ensure that we do not lose sight of our responsibility to the earth. We know it is still possible to save “Our Mother”, but we must also have in place, something to remind us each and every day about our true relationship and responsibility to the earth. Although the processes of impoverishment outlined in section three have caused much damage to our culture and other Indigenous cultures, the teachings and the understanding of our role are still very much alive with our traditional people. We believe that this is true for all Indigenous cultures. From our limited contact and understanding, we have seen the vestiges of the old ways in Mexico, South America, Africa, Australia, Asia, India, and other countries that have Indigenous populations.

Each one of these Indigenous populations is struggling to maintain their sense of being and their place on the earth. The reality of our culture, and likely other Indigenous cultures, is played out in a population that resembles a range of reflections of Indigenous nature. While not homogenous in its understanding of what it means to be an Indigenous person from the old ways, there are still the seeds of the old teachers. The ways in which the people live their day to day lives, interact with their families and friends, and the way in which they act out their role and responsibility to the community are still a reflection of the old ways. While we view this as a positive element of the Indigenous population, western thinking has only been able to understand this as the “Indian problem”.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ We believe that there is a responsibility and a necessity to promote the strengthening and re-building of the last vestiges of sustainable societies – the indigenous culture.

Indigenous Identity and Social Conflict

What exists in our community today are reflections of our Indigenous nature running the gamut from those who have assimilated into mainstream culture to the last vestiges of our conscious connection with our roles and responsibilities to the earth, the traditional people. Five hundred years of contact and the concomitant processes of impoverishment outlined in previous sections of this report have produced this variety of indigenous natures. The eroding and dismantling of a way of life and the Indigenous people of our territories has taken its toll.

Because of this, many people are relegated to the negative aspects of Indigenous reality that have been given to us, and like a self-fulfilling prophecy they come home to rest. There are those who have assimilated into the mainstream. There are those people that recognize something about themselves other than the obvious shades of brown, that make them understand themselves as Indigenous people; language as the transmitter of culture is one of those things. And, there are many like our traditional people who understand that we are Indigenous people because of our relationship to the earth and the understanding of the natural law.

CURRENT REALITIES – ALTERED RELATIONS

As Indigenous people move further and further away from the original teachings of our ancestors and begin to adopt mainstream values and systems, the chances of reclaiming sustainable societies grows further away as a reality for Indigenous people and for the rest of the planet. The truth of the matter is, the effects of history are contained inside Indigenous people today. This includes people who reside on reserves, the “urban” Indian, or any of the legal designations that have been forced upon us and to some degree accepted. If, as Indigenous people we do not make the conscious effort to address the effects of history contained within ourselves, we run the risk of finishing the colonization process. Indigenous people will themselves become the colonizer. The potential for this exists and becomes apparent when we examine the conflicts in our current reality, ourselves, our systems and our politics.

The conflict that exists in our community today is a direct result of the processes we spoke of earlier. Violence against women in our community by the men of our community is epidemic. While we agree that the colonial relationship is largely responsible for this and that the systems that advanced this situation should be held responsible, we know that the first step to healing is to bring the issue out into the light of day. The men in our community still hide from this truth and many continue to perpetrate violence on women. Silence is tantamount to complicity.

The obvious reason for this continuing is that the men of our community have failed to take stock of the effects of the colonial relationship on their lives and they have forgotten the lessons of our ancestors, that everything and everyone must be treated equally and with respect for their role in creation.

As the understanding of men’s roles changed over the period of contact, men began to accept the definitions of mainstream and began to live by them more and more. The change from the understanding of our role as helpers to women and their role as creators has been replaced by man as the bread-winner and the head of the household. This is not traditional understanding, this is the world of the nuclear family and mainstream thinking. This role became doubly problematic when the men of our community were unable to contribute to the family and the community because the traditional economy had been destroyed and Indigenous people had been locked out of the wage labor economy. While adopting the belief that the primary role of breadwinner went to the men of the community, their ability to fulfill this role was virtually non-existent. The implications of this are obvious, the high rate of alcohol abuse, the acting out of anger towards women, the need to exercise personal power over women, children, families and community as a replacement for a sense of personal worth. The whole issue of self esteem and self identity is one that Indigenous men are still grappling with today. There are only two choices as far as we can see: to accept mainstream or to return to the ways given by our ancestors. The more difficult choice is the latter because it means exposing the lie of your life to yourself and your people. It is the most painful but it is also the most rewarding.

Another implication of the colonial relationship is also evident in the political reality of Indigenous people in our territories. As we move closer and closer to self government as a reality, we also move closer to the possibility that we will continue the process of colonization

ourselves. We have signs that our leadership have not been cognizant of this potential loss of our identity. They have been living by the political reality of mainstream for so long, fighting for the right to be ourselves that it appears at times that they have forgotten the original vision. One of the problems of playing the game with mainstream and getting good at it, is that you run the risk of becoming mainstream. We fear that our leadership may have learned the lessons too well. To avoid doing this, they must listen to the voices of the people, not only to listen but to seek out their concerns actively and openly, even if it is not what they want to hear. This is the way that our leaders of old insured their relevancy to the people.

The systems that guide our leadership today are not the systems that guided our leadership yesterday. The Department of Indian Affairs is the system that has been responsible for the delivery of the assimilationist, racist and hierarchical policy and programs of mainstream. That system was built on the values of western thinking and still contains those values regardless of who sits in the seat of power. We hope that our leadership has not forgotten this and that they have the insight and the foresight to develop new ways based on old teachings. As we move closer to taking back the control of our lives from those who do not understand our ways, we must insure that we do not simply adopt the same systems that brought us to this condition.

For instance, in our territories, we have been supported to take over mainstream systems like child welfare services under the guise of assuming control over our own affairs. We have touted this as self determination because it has left the hands of non-indigenous people and has been placed in our hands, under our control. But it is still intrinsically the same system with the same standards and in fact, it is still the same legislation that has controlled our people and alienated them from their children, families and their community.

We must recognize the signs and these signs must be heeded if we are to ensure that we follow the path set out for us by our ancestors, the path they developed over thousands of years of trial and error. We are fortunate that the contact, as brutal as it was, was relatively short. The knowledge is still there and in fact, most of our people reflect in their day to day living the basic principles of the teachings of the old people. Probably the most significant reason for this occurrence is that who and what we are to become, is given to us by the time we are six years old. During that time most of us were still physically located inside our family systems, including extended families, and likely were exposed to the stories and legends of our ancestors, in whatever form they may have taken. It is our belief that the core value and beliefs that make us who and what we are as Indigenous people, are still intact even where it is not apparent to us. These beliefs represent to us, reflections of the basic values that were contained in the teachings of our ancestors. They have been transmitted to the generations as core feelings and beliefs, even where sustained effort through the residential schools and the other policies of assimilation have ripped away the definitions and understanding of these feelings and beliefs.

The resiliency of our people, though deeply disturbed by the processes of impoverishment, is like a spring of hope that is tapped into again and again. This hope is found inside the prophecy of the seven generations and somehow continues even though it is under the surface and not always visible, even to the ones who are affected by it. We believe that the work of tying together the original teaching of our ancestors to those feelings and beliefs about ourselves and our Indigenous nature is a task that can be accomplished through the healing techniques of our

people. Further, the only way to put away those gnawing feelings of confusion and despair experienced by our people, is through our own teachings and healing practices. But this is a task that will take considerable effort and commitment from the Indigenous and non-indigenous person alike. This commitment must deal with the current realities of our community and the conflict that rises as result of this.

The only avenue to sustaining our culture and our role as the caretakers of this planet is not through adopting the non-indigenous systems, but through the creation of our own mechanisms of change based upon the values, beliefs and systems of our original teachings. Considerable healing will be required to accomplish this task. This healing needs also to be available to non-indigenous people so they can participate in the healing of the planet. It is not our contention that we can do this alone, rather it is our contention that we must do this together. The beginning of this process entails recognition of the contributions and benefits to be realized through an Indigenous perspective and support for Indigenous people in the further strengthening of their culture.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ If, as Indigenous people we do not make the conscious effort to address the effects of history contained within ourselves we run the risk of finishing the colonization process. ² It is our belief that the core value and beliefs that make us who we are and what we are as Indigenous people, are still intact even where it is not apparent to us.

Indigenous Health and Healing Processes

Healing for Indigenous people means a number of significant things. Their minds must be healed from the ravages of centuries of oppression. Their bodies must be reclaimed from alcohol and abuse, both sexual and physical. Their spirits must be reclaimed, the spirit of their ancestors not the spirit of Christianity or any other doctrine. It means all of these things and all of these things at once. From our experience, it is possible to do this. We have found where psychoanalysis, conventional therapy, and other means of dealing with peoples' problems, have failed, there is one way that has consistently given results and that has changed peoples' lives profoundly, giving them a renewed sense of self, a stronger foundation to face the world and a vision for the future. This way entails the reclamation of their understanding of themselves as Indigenous peoples and their role on this planet.

It is to be expected that not everyone will embrace the full significance of this healing. Some will simply say that knowing about my history and my place on this planet is enough to give me the strength to have pride in myself as an Indigenous person and to face the barrage of negative information about Indigenous people. This will be enough to allow them to go on. But simply starting the process of viewing themselves positively where the messages received were all negative, can allow Indigenous people to move in directions that were never open to them before.

While it may sound as if sudden inspiration comes to people, the process of reclaiming the self is a long and protracted process. What is significant about this, however, is that once the journey begins, the possibilities of change increase dramatically. Indigenous people, who have come to the understanding of their true nature as Indigenous people, are faced with the additional

challenge of maintaining this focus in light of the varying attitudes of Indigenous nature outlined earlier as well as the attitudes of non-Indigenous people who misunderstand this new found strength and are critical of its significance to long-term benefits and healing. This includes professionals in the helping professions and the wider society. It is for this reason that the healing process for Indigenous people must be facilitated by Indigenous people using the healing methods that are specific to their culture. This next section will outline the kinds of healing that are particular to the nations in our territories as well as providing some insights into their significance to the wider society.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ The only avenue to sustaining our culture and our role as the caretakers of this planet is not through adopting the non-Indigenous systems, but through the creation of our own mechanisms of change based upon the values, beliefs and systems of our original teachings.

UNDERSTANDING THE COLONIAL RELATIONSHIP

The first step toward healing is through the understanding of the effects that the colonial relationship has had on our ancestors, our communities, our families and ultimately ourselves. It is the process of historical reconstruction from an Indigenous perspective. It means understanding the implications that the fur trade has had on our economies that led to underdevelopment and dependency. It means understanding the systematic process of dismantling our modes of communication by the adjunct of the trade relationship and the bastardization of our leaders' roles in our social order. Unknown substances like alcohol were used intentionally to lower our resistance to the traders and their greed for more furs. The missionaries and their ethnocentric vision and religious zeal consciously and systematically attempted to denigrate who we were as Indigenous people. The governments of the day financed the missionary movement to civilize the Indigenous people based upon their skewed notion of what civilized meant. The federal government implemented the treaties and the legal labels that further entrenched our dependency on the state and withered away our traditional way of life. They also gave our lands away to the new settlers who grew to hate us because we were different. The people of the western world stood back and watched this all happen in the name of expansion and a better way of life for their children and their future generations.

This first step is an emancipating step for Indigenous people to take. It is the re-shaping of the order of the world that lifts the chains of the oppressor from their shoulders and prepares them anew for the struggle that will inevitably come.

It is a bold step to ask the progeny of western society to take along with us. However, it is the only way to undo the damage of their forefathers. Like the Holocaust, they cannot be afraid to admit their mistakes, because denying them allows the process to continue. We believe that finally the world is becoming cognizant that the sands in the hour glass of our existence are quickly running out and failure to turn it over means the end of our world as we know it. We believe that this is a necessary first step toward Indigenous healing and the healing of the global community and hence, the planet.

This process has already begun in our community. We have been to the institutions of the mainstream and have learned their interpretations of the history of the world. Participating in the

mainstream has given us insights into the reasons for its failure to deal with indigenous people in a fair and human way. We have come away with a strengthened resolve to do things in our own way. We must do this because the mainstream and its methods have failed us consistently in all aspects of our lives. Because we know this and because we know that we are not alone in our concern for the health of the world, we are willing to share our ways of healing with other Indigenous people and with non-indigenous people as well. The healing techniques that we have been given by our ancestors can be applied to all nations. These healing techniques can help us to reconnect to the source of our life. This source is the natural world and the planet that sustains us.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ Because we know that we are not alone in our concern for the health of the world, we are willing to share our ways of healing with other Indigenous people and with non-Indigenous people as well.

TRADITIONAL PEOPLE

One of the most significant and freeing aspects of the teachings of our ways is the knowledge that all things have a spirit and that this spirit is the common denominator for all of creation. In the world of human beings, people are often measured by the more visible and tangible aspects of their being; money, good looks and fast cars. In the world of the spirit, you are seen by who you are on the inside. You are seen as the vessel of the gifts that have been given to you by the creation and not by what has been given to you in the world of man. Each gift has role with respect to our people and a responsibility to the creation. One gift is not more important than the other. As human being to human being, we are taught that each of our roles is integral to the functioning of the whole and that we are given these gifts to provide balance to each other.

Further, we are taught that our spirits are no different than the spirits of the plants and the animal world. They too have a role to perform that is integrally tied to the rest of creation. This understanding of our spirits does two things for the way in which we come to see ourselves. First, it helps us to realize that we are important, we have a reason to be here that is just as significant as any one else. It humbles us because it places us on an equal footing with the rest of the creation. When we come to realize this, it becomes more difficult to be callous and unfeeling toward our fellow human beings and also to the other parts of the creation. They too have a spirit as significant as our own.

This is the beginning of our understanding of ourselves as Indigenous people. There are hundreds of legends and stories that outline our roles and responsibilities to all the aspects of our creation. These stories have been passed down from generation to generation. They are not written anywhere but are a part of our oral history. Like other people we have stories that speak of the first human being and his/her responsibility to the creation. We have stories of the travels of the people that outline the hardships and the lessons learnt through these. We have stories that tell of the things that the animal and the plant world have taught us about survival and respect for the planet. We have stories that outline how our political systems came to be. We have stories that tell of contact with other Indigenous people and how we formed alliances and friendships with them.

Our stories are our history that give our sense of who we are as a people and what our roles and responsibilities are to each other and to creation. Just as the history of European man gives them a reference point, so too do our teachings about ourselves. We know that these teachings need to be transmitted to our people if we are to overcome the damage that has come about over the last many years. This can happen through our traditional people. They have the teachings and the knowledge of the ceremonies, rituals and healing methods of our ancestors.

Our traditional people are out there doing the work that has been given to them. They are doing this work in the face of opposition from their own people and from the mainstream systems that don't understand the significance of this work in healing our people. Our own people resist because they have been brainwashed into believing the messages of the church when it said our ways were heathen and the worship of the devil. Mainstream systems resist because they are tied to their own understanding of the therapeutic milieu that focuses on the individual and their pathology. They fail to recognize that the pathology of the Indigenous person is contained inside the history of oppression and is not a function of the individual being. They continue to try and deal with the symptom and not the problem.

Our problem is not that we don't have enough traditional people to impart the teachings of our ways. Our problem is that the barriers to accomplishing this have been put in place by the colonizer over the last many years and continue to be legitimized by ignoring the contribution that our traditional people and the teachings of our ways have to offer.

The use of these teachings through our traditional people must be a process that is facilitated at some real, concrete levels. Barriers that stop this from occurring must be removed. These barriers are in the halls of the bureaucrats and the policy makers of every country with an Indigenous population. Simply by recognizing the importance of our perspective and our teachings to the healing of our own people, we can begin to dismantle the barriers of ignorance. This recognition can see its implementation through policy and legislative change in those areas that impact on our people most significantly: child welfare, justice and mental health, just to name a few. These policy changes would need to be reflective of an Indigenous perspective so that we might be able to incorporate our practices and our teachings into systems that have been previously denied to us.

Other mainstream systems that have been working to alter our understandings of ourselves must be made to cease and desist. This includes the church and the educational apparatus of the mainstream. While historically, organized religion tried to destroy our culture, today it is trying to alter it under the guise of acceptance. The educational system also tried to extinguish our culture. Today, however, it is attempting to assimilate gently by offering us special programs and alternatives, still in the context of mainstream ideas about education.

Our spirituality stands by itself, it does not need another religious belief to shore it up. Our concept of education stands by itself, it is different; mainstream is based on competition, ours is based on cooperation. This has significant implications for the concept of education. These implications can be best dealt with by our own people, our traditional people.

While it can be expected that many of our people would not have heard many of the traditional

stories and legends of our past, it can be expected that they would have some rudimentary knowledge that relates to these stories. This rudimentary knowledge is a product of their life inside their family, community and their nation. It is the role of our traditional people to make this available to our people. The dissemination of this knowledge needs to be strongly promoted within our community considering our current state and the drifting that has occurred from those original teachings over the last few hundred years. Where mainstream systems have failed our people, we need to ease the pain and suffering of those who have been twisted and tortured under the colonial relationship that has demeaned and undermined their sense of self. This relief can only be accomplished through the teachings of our way and the use of our traditional people in this process.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ Our traditional people have the teachings and the knowledge of the ceremonies, rituals and healing methods of our ancestors.

² Our spirituality stands by itself. Our concept of education stands by itself.

MODES OF HEALING

In our territories and through our traditional people, we have been given certain ways and means to reconnect ourselves to our Mother and to remind ourselves of our relationship to her. These methods are deeply entrenched in the ways of our ancestors and their understanding of our relationship to the earth. They are not only ways of reconnecting, they are also the healing ways for our people.

The Healing Circle

One of the most ancient and effective methods that our people used to heal themselves was through conversation. While dialogue among our people took many forms, there were specific types of structures that were used and are still used today to promote healing in individuals and in groups. The healing circle today is a powerful tool for healing because, as Indigenous people we have many common experiences that have caused much pain in our lives, the circle presents an opportunity to release this pain and to support each other through it.

The healing circle is premised upon the concept of respect, non-interference and the recognition that the spirits of our grandfathers and the creator are present to guide us through the process. In this method of healing, our people asked for guidance and sensitivity through the sacred pipe and called upon the participants to exercise care and respect when talking. Each person was given the opportunity to speak without interruption. Each person was asked to listen closely to all that had been said so that solutions could be found that made the greatest sense to the individual. Oftentimes it was found that the pain being experienced by one individual was the same pain experienced by another. This commonality allowed people to put their feelings in context. Sometimes conflict existed between people and the circle provided a forum for their feelings to be heard and validated. Always it was a learning experience, because you became acutely aware of the feelings that were contained inside of people and learned new ways of dealing with your problems. It was understood by all who participated that what was said in the circle remained there.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ In this method of healing, our people asked for guidance and sensitivity through the sacred pipe and called upon the participants to exercise care and respect when talking.

The Sweat Lodge

The sweat lodge is given to the Indigenous people of our territories as a means of reminding ourselves of our relationship to the earth and as means of purifying our spirits. The lodge was constructed in the form of a dome; inside of the lodge a pit was dug to receive the hot rocks from the fire. These rocks contained the spirits of our grandfathers and our grandmothers. As the rocks were placed in the pit, the door would be closed, surrounding everyone in total darkness.

There is a special significance to each thing used in the lodge that facilitated the process of healing and reconnecting. The shape of the lodge was representative of the womb of women. It represented the womb of our Mother the earth. Inside this womb surrounded in darkness, you returned to that first safe place of your existence. As water was poured upon the hot rocks, steam filled the lodge and you were reminded of the pain and suffering that was experienced to bring you into the world. You were reminded that you owed your life to your mother and that like each person in the lodge, you were reduced to our common denominator. We are all alike in that we come to this world in the same way. Exiting the lodge upon completion was akin to being reborn into the world, a little more humble for the Suffering that you had experienced. It reminded you of how little you suffered in comparison to the suffering of our mothers.

As you sat in the lodge you were not expected to concern yourself with the outer Shell that we carry around with us. In the lodge it was the spirit that spoke. Your eyes could not see and pass judgement on someone because of the way the person looked, your spirit spoke to the spirits of the other participants. As the water was poured upon the rocks, the steam that escaped represented the spirits of the grandfathers and grandmothers. Because they have seen the earth from the first day of its creation, the spirit of the rocks, which represent the oldest spirits on the planet, are held in great respect. As these spirits entered the lodge, your own spirit spoke to them and asked for direction and guidance.

Finally, the process consisted of four rounds; after each round the door was opened and the steam was allowed to escape. Each round of the sweat represented the four directions of the earth. Each of these directions had something to teach us about the cycles of life that were represented in the seasons. Each time a round began you were reminded to think of this and to find some answers to the questions that came with you to the lodge.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ The Sweat Lodge is given to the Indigenous people of our territories as a means of reminding ourselves of our relationship to the earth and as a means of purifying our spirits.

Medicine People

In our society there are specific people that are charged with the responsibility for understanding the healing qualities of the plants, the minerals and the spirits of our environment. These people

were afforded a special place around our fires because they had gone through a long and difficult process of training to be afforded the title of medicine person. It was not just a matter of learning the qualities of the plants and the minerals; the training consisted of many years of preparing the spirit for this role through fasting and sacrifices of self. Knowledge about the history and the legends of the people were a part of the preparation for this role as well.

The medicine person was called upon to help in the healing of physical ailments that included everything from toothaches to physical injury. This healing did not simply occur with respect to the needs of the body, but also took into consideration the needs of the spirit. Physical ailments were attended to from both these aspects and often the medicine person would deal with just the aspect of spiritual healing. Medicine people were called upon to provide advice on matters of the community, especially when major decisions needed to be made, a role with central importance for the health and well-being of the people.

It is always difficult to describe the significance of the healing practice of Indigenous people. While it is relatively easy to provide a description of the practice, it is not so simple to make understood the interconnectedness of all these ways of healing. The common thread that runs throughout all of these healing practices is the spiritual nature contained in each one of them. Each of these practices is aimed at placing the person in relation to the spirit and in the context of his/her role with respect to the creation. None of these practices are discrete means of healing. Rather, it is likely that they would be used in combination with each other to facilitate the whole person healing.

Another significant commonality throughout these practices is the consistent reminder of interconnectedness to each other as spiritual beings and to our responsibility and accountability to our forefathers and the messages that they have handed down to us as Indigenous people.

Other Indigenous Views: Traditional Medicine in Mexico Traditional medicine and healing have re-emerged as an issue for Indigenous people recently. Traditional healers, medicine men and women are now re-grouping in 17 organizations in Oaxacca and practicing their art in their community. They are evolving various skills ranging from Indigenous mid-wives to specialized healers. Therapies based on herbs, massages, sweat, chiropractic, are used for all sorts of physical and mental diseases.

After bitter struggle with official associations of physicians, medicine people began to be more respected by them and in some instances, have shared their experience during public meetings and produced two reports on traditional medicines. Source: Meeting with Indigenous people in the state of Oaxaca (Mexico) March 1-5, 1992

Mind, Body and Spirit

Our ancestors had achieved a balance with all the aspects of the earth. They had accomplished this through the development of their relationship to the earth parallel to the plants, animals and all living things. This parallel understanding gave to rise systems of thought that placed them in relation and on an equal footing with all things. The relationship that arose was one of respect and reciprocity that nourished their minds and provided them with a way of understanding their roles and responsibilities in relation to the creation. They drew their sustenance from the plants

and the animals and nourished their bodies on the organic matter of the earth. They took only what they needed to live and through communion and the honoring of the gifts of creation, they appeased the spirits of the earth and joined their spirit with the spirits of the plants and the animals that had given their life so they might survive.

The whole system of Indigenous thought is a reflection of this balance of mind, body and spirit. The mechanisms by which this was delivered on a day to day basis were geared to insuring that the balance was maintained. The teachings that have been given to us are our guidelines and standards that are meant to ensure that we continue to maintain the balance. The healing methods passed to us are the practical applications of the healing process to restore balance when we find ourselves moving in a different direction other than the one provided.

Relatively undisturbed, our ancestors were able to establish an order to the world that was healthy and that focused on the well-being of all creation. The experience of Indigenous people lately suggests that this balance has been disturbed. The mechanisms that have contributed to this have already been stated.

We can realign this balance for ourselves as Indigenous people through the reconstruction of our lives. We begin this process by emptying our minds of the false messages that have been forced on us over the last many years. This occurs through a re-education of our people about the real history of the colonial relationship and its effects on our people and their sense of identity and self esteem. We should begin this process with the youngest child to make him/her aware of history of Indigenous peoples as an oppressed group. This has led to our current state of affairs. We want to break the cycle of self-hatred and self-denial and place the responsibility where it belongs. We need to continue this process with the older people of our nations. They are still suffering from the pain of oppression and their scars run deep. They can be healed only through exposing them to the air and allowing them to know that they have no need to continue self inflicting the wounds given to them by someone else.

Once we have begun to deal with this false sense of self we can begin to reclaim the aspect of our minds that truly belongs to us as Indigenous people. This is the knowledge of our ancestors. We can begin to re-construct our history based upon the teachings of our ancestors. What has been presented to us is not the truth of our history; that our history was based upon respect for ourselves and all things as part of creation. We can begin to identify the cycle of pain and suffering that ha been our experience and see that it doesn't belong to us. Once we have done this we have created the possibility of breaking the cycle and of starting our lives on a new and yet a very old path.

Once the cycle is broken, we can begin to heal our bodies from the ravages of the abuses heaped upon us by things over which we have no control. While the original scars were given by other hands it is likely that we have been inflicting ourselves and our brothers and sisters with the same scars over and over again. We need to look at the way in which we are abusing ourselves through the use of alcohol and drugs and understand why we are doing this. We know we can stop and begin to heal our bodies and make them strong in the way our ancestors bodies were strong, free of substances that were not meant to be used by us.

As we become more clear-minded about where our pain and suffering has come from, and as our understanding grows about our own history in a more positive light, we can begin the process of healing our spirit. We can begin the process of re-connecting ourselves through the healing practices that were given to us by our ancestors. As our understanding of our roles and responsibilities to ourselves and to our creation grows, our spirit will grow along with this.

The culmination of this process will be the recognition of our role as the caretakers of the planet. We need to share this knowledge with the wider society as the caretakers; we need to ensure that the creation is here for the seventh generation to come.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ The whole system of Indigenous thought is a reflection of this balance of mind, body and spirit.

Other Indigenous Views: Healing and Charisma – India All night congregations are held in Pabu's memory at which his noble deed are sung with great devotion. The Bhil community of the desert region cherishes Pabu's memory as a comrade and practices such as rituals which would bring them in direct communion, with Pabu's defied soul enabling them to extend Pabu's beneficiary to those in distress. Pabu's charisma still holds good and remains a major healing process to this day. Pabu's charismatic beneficiaries are known as Bhopa (a general term for faith healer) and they are highly revered in the community. Only a Bhil observing a strict ritualistic pure life can become Pabu's Bhopa.

The Importance of Land in Strengthening the Process of Healing

Access to land is central to Indigenous health and healing. The connection to land and the relationships and obligations that arise from that connection are the core of the Indigenous identity. When Indigenous people are separated from the land, they are separated from their source of strength and healing. Indigenous people who reside in urban areas have the most difficulty maintaining that relationship. For this reason, it is necessary to include strategies for accessing a land base as a component of a health and healing process for urban Indigenous peoples.

Although some Indigenous people living in cities are in fact living in their traditional territories, since towns and cities simply grew up around them, many people do not live in cities by choice. Large numbers of people have migrated to cities to escape violence and instability in their territories; many flee the environmental destruction that has destroyed their traditional subsistence lifestyle, leaving a welfare economy in its wake; many come to cities in search of better economic opportunities. For these people, returning home is not a real option. A significant proportion of urban population is second, and third, generation urban; their parents were people who migrated to cities in the post-war period. For all intents and purposes, the rural roots of this group have been permanently separated.

Where returning to home territories is an option, there are issues of land allocation and housing availability, both of which are highly political. There are problems relating to the levels of violence, alcoholism and chemical addictions to which most people do not want to expose their children plus concerns with the quality and availability of education and health services. These

factors tend to mitigate against people returning to their territories.

Indigenous peoples, who wish to maintain sustainable lifestyles, require access to land to establish permanent residential communities, healing lodges and cultural camps. The experience of people working in an urban environment has been one of constant struggle to develop services and resources that will meet the social, economic and spiritual needs of children, youth, women and families. Although much success has been achieved, the development has been inadequate to ensure that our children will have a future. Increasingly, people have come to believe that children and youth must be reconnected with the land if they are to survive as Indigenous people. Further, while traditional people who live in urban areas can maintain their identity with a less than continuous relationship with the land, for people who are just beginning to return to these ways, and who often have major life difficulties to deal with as well, it is necessary to remove them at least temporarily from the urban environment.

Healing lodges and cultural camps on permanent land bases would provide places where Indigenous people could go to heal and renew mind, body and spirit. These healing centres would provide places to which people can go to escape from racism, exploitation, violence, addictions, unemployment and homelessness. They would provide places to go and live on the land according to those original instructions given to us by the Creator. They would provide opportunities to work towards self-sufficiency in food, shelter, and certain other basic requirements. Such healing centres would provide a base for the spiritual ceremonies and practices.

Healing lodges and cultural camps would be developed as resources for affiliated urban-based projects and services. Additionally, they would provide viable alternatives to the current system of custodial care practiced by child welfare and correction institutions. These centres would also be a vehicle for integrating the traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples with the more technical knowledge of environmentalists to produce a theory and practice of sustainable development.

Because of the central place of land in the healing process, governments and funding agencies must accept land acquisition as a legitimate and necessary component of a funding proposal. Governments should explore creative ways of meeting this requirement, including making crown lands and parks available for such settlements. Governments and environmentalists must recognize that wilderness areas and settlements by traditional Indigenous peoples are not mutually exclusive and that traditional lifestyles are not only consistent with but central to environmental and wildlife preservation. By demonstrating how people and nature can co-exist and thrive, such settlements would become living examples of sustainable societies.

We believe that the process of healing and the well-being of current and future generations lies in first understanding why these conflicts between Indigenous, non-Indigenous and decision-makers exist today. Then each of us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, must take an active role in the healing process. The answers to sustainability lie with the original teachings that outline our responsibility to the earth; those teachings are contained in the traditional people of our territories. In order to heal our own people, we must return these teachings and this role back to them.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ Access to land is central to Indigenous health and healing. The connection to land and the relationships and obligations that arise from that connection are the core of the Indigenous identity.

Control Over Local Economies

ACCESS AND CONTROL OVER LAND

If Indigenous people everywhere are to survive as a distinct people, they must have access to, and control over a land base, simply because culture and economy are indivisible. Westerners tend to equate culture with language or other outward manifestations such as dress, music, dance and art. However, our culture is more than this. It is a way of life. People cannot maintain their culture unless they can continue to reproduce themselves physically. Our culture, and we venture to say all Indigenous cultures, are based upon a spiritual and material dependence on the land. To the degree that this relationship is severed, Indigenous culture will disappear.

Westerners have tended not to understand, or to value the importance of the traditional Indigenous economy. They have always believed that western/technological society is a superior mode of production, one which freed Indigenous people from the tyranny of subsistence. According to the Western view, the superior form of production methods and management reduced labor, increased leisure time and protected against the arbitrariness of nature. Westerners have so devalued our traditional economy that they consider those participating in subsistence economies to be unemployed. Not only do westerners believe Indigenous labor to be underused, they consider underdeveloped resources to be wasted. This attitude can be witnessed in the recent complaint of the Premier of Quebec that valuable hydro electric capacity is being wasted by the failure to dam the rivers that run into the Hudson Bay.

Indigenous people do not hold the modern economy in such esteem. We have pointed out that our ancestors have survived for thousands of years by following the original instructions given by the Creator about how our people are to live on the lands. In our entire history of life on this earth, our ancestors have maintained and ensured viability of the land for future generations and have not wrought the level of devastation caused by westerners over their relatively short period of dominance over the earth. Our people do not wish to adopt western ways, we believe that the western way of life will soon disappear because of its failure to abide by natural law.

The supposed inferiority of traditional economies is not validated by fact. Research into subsistence economies has demonstrated that so-called "primitive" societies, people who earn their livelihood from hunting, fishing, gathering and small-scale agriculture - actually enjoyed a greater amount of leisure time since they were able to meet their survival need relatively easily. This is in direct contradiction to the prevalent western view. Most Indigenous societies deliberately avoided accumulating surplus, and where they did, they had instituted various methods of surplus consumption to ensure that the accumulated wealth was distributed equally among members of their society. This included feasts and give-aways, as well as the extensive kinship relations and social sanctions against individual wealth accumulation. Although many environments that sustain subsistence economies could support increased production and

accumulation, as well as larger populations, our people deliberately underproduced; they harvested and consumed only what they needed and conserved the rest for future generations. The underuse of economic capacity minimizes the risk of resource depletion and enhances the resilience of the resource base, thus ensuring the survival of people.

It is noted that contrary to prevalent western mythology about the superiority of western production systems, the current era is the time of chronic malnutrition. Where food shortages likely occurred, from time to time in the pre-contact period due to the failure of the hunt or the crop, the amount of hunger in the world has in fact increased over the history of western civilization to the point where it has become institutionalized. Modern technology, such as that employed in the so called "green revolution", has produced short-term gains in productivity, but over the long term it has decreased the carrying capacity of the land. While the technical know-how, including both traditional and modern methods, is capable of producing sufficient food to feed the world's population, the economic model, which concentrates wealth in the hands of a privileged few, has created levels of hunger and chronic malnutrition in both the developed and the developing world.

While westerners have always believed that Indigenous people must be brought into the modern world, the subsistence economy - hunting, fishing, gathering and small-scale agriculture - is, in fact, part of the modern world. In many parts of the Americas, Indigenous people have chosen to continue to engage in those economic activities that have sustained their people for many generations. But, increasingly, the traditional subsistence economy is unable to support Indigenous peoples because of the dispossession from the land and the destructive development schemes of western thinking.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ If Indigenous people everywhere are to survive as a distinct people, they must have access to, and control over a land base, simply because culture and economy are indivisible.

² The subsistence economy – hunting, fishing, gathering and small-scale agriculture – is, in fact, part of the modern world.

Other Indigenous Views: Indigenous Forest Dwellers A group explained it struggles to regain control over its forest communal property after a 40-year lease to industries. They used legal measures, organized small production groups with a system of collective credit. After almost twelve years of struggle this community was able to build and maintain forest education involving all of its members from production to marketing to accounting, with a focus on evolving skills from school age to adulthood.

This endeavor is aimed at educating youth and adults in a self-reliant way towards the respect of forest, within the framework of Indigenous knowledge and culture.

This community strives to evolve agroforestry but experiences tremendous problems related to marketing the products. Source: Meeting with the Indigenous people in the state of Oaxaca (Mexico) March 1-5, 1992

PROTECTION OF TREATY RIGHTS/RESTORATION OF TRADITIONAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Treaty guaranteed rights to hunt and fish are central to many subsistence economies and were a condition insisted upon by our ancestors when the treaties were signed. Currently, these rights are under assault by individuals and groups who believe that no one should have special rights. Commercial fishing interests and sport and trophy hunters take the position that treaties are ancient history, and that Indigenous people should be subject to the same laws as everyone else. In some cases, such as the Wisconsin spear fishing, the attacks on Indigenous people involved in the treaty harvest are often racist and violent.

The traditional subsistence economy is under attack by animal rights activists who seek to impose their values on Indigenous people. The success of the efforts of these groups in destroying the market for furs has caused considerable hardship in many of our communities who depend on this source of income to subsidize their subsistence livelihood. It appears that these groups have more concern with the well-being of animals than they have for Indigenous people.

The right to resource management is critical to traditional subsistence economies, and therefore, should be recognized and restored. Colonial and neo-colonial state policies separated Indigenous people from an important traditional source of sustenance, although illegal harvests continue. State policies have instituted severe constraints on the exercise of the customary rights of Indigenous people, reserved the sole authority to grant access and only under highly restrictive conditions and with a total prohibition on the barter or sale of such products. At the same time they have given non-Indigenous people access to the resources.

Indigenous people have refused to acknowledge the artificial barriers to their harvest since the primary objective of these laws is to conserve the resource for non-Indigenous commercial interests and sports/trophy hunters and fishermen. Our people have continued to practice our traditional conservation methods, but when we are found to be in violation of state legislation, our harvest is criminalized. In Canada, recent Supreme Court decisions recognizing the right of Indigenous people to continue their traditional harvest have largely failed to change government practice.

SUBSISTENCE ECONOMIES/ECO-TOURISM

There is a growing market for eco-tourism and alternative tourism that could provide a livelihood for our people in ways that are culturally and ecologically sustainable. Such tourism could be a vehicle for the promotion and understanding of the issues confronting our people and could be an important means of protecting the traditional knowledge and practices of Indigenous people to the larger society.

PROTECTION OF ART AND CRAFTS

Government policy should be changed to prevent the import of cheaper imitations of Indigenous arts and crafts. These imports take income away from Indigenous artists and craftspersons who could be earning a livelihood from their skills.

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTS THROUGH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Indigenous people have evolved ways of living that are well suited to fragile environments. Westerners have no appreciation of the carrying capacity of particular lands; they believe that any land can be put to use. According to this attitude, lands are wasted when they are left for subsistence economic activities. Because of this, arid and semi-arid lands are irrigated for agriculture, and rain forests are cleared for farming and cattle raising. The failure of agriculture in the rain forests due to soil exhaustion, and in the alkaline conditions caused by the constant irrigation of arid lands, proves that these activities are not sustainable.

Traditional subsistence economic activities are not inefficient and primitive. They are in fact, the most appropriate, effective and efficient mode of production for particular lands. Having survived for thousands of years, these practices are inherently sustainable. Indigenous people, our people, have maintained ecological vigilance through trial and error, our people have evolved ways to protect themselves against climatic changes and other natural hazards. Thus, many people prefer to utilize Indigenous plant varieties rather than the introduced higher yield varieties, because they are more stable.

Ensuring resource diversification is another characteristic of traditional Indigenous societies. This principle is corollary to the one identified in the foregoing paragraph. Material and social resources are spread over a large territory as security over natural disaster. Resource diversification follows up the strategy of an optimal mix of resource in an ecologically homogeneous space. The larger the choice of species or plant varieties in a given ecosystem, the less vulnerable they are to natural fluctuations.

Certain technologies such as computers, quotas, satellite mapping and minimum sustainable yield analysis, that have been introduced to some Indigenous societies for wildlife and resource management, are unnecessary in terms of production; most importantly they have serious negative impacts on the retention of traditional knowledge and skills and on the relationship between the people and the animals. Although Indigenous people have survived for thousands of years by following well established economic practices, including wildlife and resource conservation, western scientists now believe that Indigenous people can no longer survive without these modern technologies.

Not only will these technologies not improve the yield obtained through traditional methods, they will create a new dependency or further destroy the environment as has been demonstrated by the introduction of individual quota systems in traditional management systems. Within a generation of the introduction of these new technologies, the traditional knowledge and skills that have been built up based upon the traditional relationship with the animals, the teaching of the Elders and the close connection with the land, will disappear. These new technologies are inherently unsustainable since they create a constant demand for money for equipment and training. They create a capacity for centralization of knowledge and information, often upon the technicians that are from outside the community.

These new methods introduce western ideas with the technology, which tend to corrupt the Indigenous world view. Traditionally, respect and reciprocity have characterized the relationship between Indigenous people and animals. To Indigenous people, animals are not simply resources, they are an equal part of creation. Because of the inter-relationship between economic practices, social relations and spiritual beliefs, beginning to see animals as resources to be exploited is likely to have significant implication for the continued integrity of the culture.

The issue of the choice of technology is critical to sustainable technology development; there are many potential choices. Capital intensive reduces the amount of labor and requires the investment of massive amounts of money. This is the predominant model used for mega-project development and capitalism generally. Labor intensive technologies substitute labor for capital. Appropriate technology for Indigenous economic development strategies would be labor-intensive. Such technology is small scale, affordable and does not create dependency. It is the technology of choice for convergent economic strategies – for production geared to meeting the local demand and need.

According to the modernization paradigm, human societies exist along a continuum where western industrial societies represent the highest form and subsistence economies the lowest. Backward subsistence economies must catch up to western societies through adopting their technology, their institutions and their culture generally. Since their technology is based upon definite assumptions that are not necessarily true, especially for other societies, such uncritical acceptance is inappropriate. For example, western technological advancement is based upon the notion of efficiency and resource scarcity that makes it necessary to use capital intensive technology. The introduction of such labor saving technology causes mass unemployment. Indigenous societies must come to their own definitions of efficiency and must be able to choose technologies that will benefit their societies. In situations where there is an abundance of labor and a scarcity of capital, it only makes sense to utilize labor-intensive technologies.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ Traditional subsistence economic activities are inherently sustainable.

CONVERGENCE AND INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In terms of economic strategy, a strategy that works toward convergence of local resource use, demand and need would be an ideal way to counteract the historical processes of underdevelopment. Such a strategy would reduce the dependence on external demand and sources and would protect Indigenous economies from unstable global markets. A convergence economic strategy would also reduce dependency upon aid. This strategy is also consistent with the goals of Indigenous people for self-determination and self-government.

The economic convergence strategy was developed in response to the uneven development of local economies by the world capitalist system. It seeks to overcome the divergent production structure of dependent economies by stopping the outflow of the economic surplus, and by creating local production structures that will meet the needs of communities.

Essentially, local economies would be re-structured in such a way that communities would produce what they consume and consume what they produce. The convergence strategy is based

upon the notion of basic goods which are products used extensively in the production of other goods. These are characterized by extensive forward and backward linkages; sectors in the local economy both buy from and sell to each other. For example, local forest products are harvested, milled, distributed and utilized in the local construction industry. Local spending power is maximized and leakages are minimized. Money is kept in circulation in the local economy rather than being leaked out through the purchase of necessary products and services from sources outside of the community. A convergence economic strategy could focus especially on achieving local self-sufficiency in forest products and the construction industry, production of household goods, food production, and the support *services* necessary for these industries .

A convergent economy is one that is organized, first and foremost, to meet local demand and only secondarily for export to the external market. Thus, a convergence strategy considers the ways in which the local economy can be organized to meet the local demand using local resources and labor. Surplus product would be available for export, and income earned from these export sales would be used to import necessary products that could not be produced locally.

The use of appropriate technology within a convergent economy meets local employment objectives. That is, labor intensive technologies are utilized rather than capital intensive technologies. A full employment strategy meets the social objective of access to meaningful productive work for the local populations. The opportunity to make a positive contribution to one's community enhances personal well-being and contribute to social integration. The convergence economic strategy, therefore, meets both social and economic need.

While small scale production is generally held to be a viable way of organizing production, because of the enhanced opportunities for local control and appropriate technology, and because such a work environment is less impersonal and alienating, there are some difficulties. These however can be overcome through integrating markets at a regional level, through cooperative arrangements between a number of Indigenous communities, and through sheltering markets and subsidizing production where necessary and possible.

Although a pure convergence strategy cannot be realistically developed by communities since they lack the necessary level of control, it is possible to implement a modified version that would begin to reverse the historical dependency of such economies. Traditional people, who can be found in every Indigenous territory, can use this model to begin to develop a capacity for self-reliance at the level of the extended family and clan. As these efforts prove to be a successful method of reorganizing production, the model is likely to be adopted on a larger scale.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ A convergence strategy considers the ways in which the local economy can be organized to meet the local demand using local resources and labour.

RESTORATION OF TRADITIONAL TRADING STRUCTURES AND MARKET MECHANISMS

While a convergence economic strategy is valuable for local economies, it is even more valuable when it is extended to include Indigenous communities in other regions. Because local economies are often constrained by their size and resource base, converging supply and demand

on a regional basis would provide new opportunities relative to economies of scale. Economic linkages between the communities in a particular region would strengthen the ability of local economies to meet the needs of their members. The same holds true for economic linkages between rural and/or northern communities and Indigenous communities in urban areas.

Direct economic linkages could be established nationally and internationally to trade or sell a range of consumption goods and alternative trading systems with non-indigenous groups, including traditional foods, building materials, and arts and crafts. Using this strategy, Indigenous people would be able to re-establish and maintain traditional exchange networks with other Indigenous nations. Such trade would directly benefit producers, and would ensure a supply of products.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ Indigenous people would be able to re-establish and maintain traditional exchange networks with other Indigenous nations.

The Importance of Indigenous Culture and Knowledge Based on the Respect for Life

The Value of Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable Development

Traditional Indigenous people should be considered a precious resource. Although traditional people have been marginalized and alienated from their communities, they are tremendously important for sustainability. They are resources to be accessed in each community. They represent a rich source of local knowledge about how to live on the land in an ecologically and socially sustainable way. They are knowledgeable about the local resource base, the animals, the plants, the water, the rocks, and the soil. In earning their livelihood in a respectful relationship with the land and raising their children to be proud of who they are, traditional people provide a living example of a sustainable lifestyle.

Throughout history, Indigenous people have demonstrated a great capacity to respond to the complexities of changing circumstances of production, culture and society. At times they have even demonstrated a capacity for endogenous change. Their knowledge is local knowledge, adapted to the culture and the ecology of each population, and matured over a period of time encompassing thousands of years. Indigenous knowledge is also in compliance with natural law, and is based on a holistic vision of life. It is the basis for agriculture, hunting, fishing, gathering, animal husbandry, food preservation and preparation, health care, education, spiritual and psychological well-being, environmental conservation, and a host of other activities.

Because of its oral tradition and the introduction of new technologies and knowledge systems, the preservation of Indigenous knowledge is at risk today.

Indigenous peoples have not been given credit for their understanding or the safe-keeping of their knowledge. Neither financial benefits nor other forms of compensation have been earned by them where their knowledge and products have been appropriated and marketed by others. For instance, the 1985 world market value for medicines derived from medicinal plants discovered from Indigenous peoples has been determined to be US \$43 billion: less than one-hundredth of one percent of the profits derived from these sources has ever been returned to those people. (Posey, 1990)

The wider society can benefit from Indigenous peoples by learning from them how to adapt to and utilize fragile, marginal environments. Their contribution to sustainable resource management built on the primacy of the relationship between people and Mother Earth needs to be recognized, protected and fostered.

Side Bar Notes: ¹Indigenous knowledge is local knowledge, adapted to the culture and the ecology of each population, and matured over a period of time encompassing thousands of years.

What Does the Indigenous perspective Have to Offer to the Wider Society!

Given a chance, Indigenous peoples may be able to save western societies from themselves. Indigenous peoples have long known that the modern industrial/technological society is inherently unsustainable and have chosen to retain their sacred link with the Earth rather than becoming part of a society that will eventually self-destruct. Taking a longer view of history than western societies normally take, it is probable that the history of the European domination on Indigenous lands will prove to be temporary, as was predicted by a patriot chief more than one hundred years ago:

...why should I mourn at the untimely fate of my people? Tribe follows tribe, and nation follows nation, like the waves of the sea. It is the order of nature, and regret is useless. Your time of decay may be distant, but it will surely come, for even the White Man...cannot be exempt from the common destiny...And when the last red man shall have perished, and the memory of my tribe shall have become a myth among the White Men, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe...At night when the streets of your cities and villages are silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled and still love this beautiful land. The White Man will never be alone...let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not powerless. Dead, did I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds. (Seattle (Sealth), Dwamish chief, 1854)

Since the time of first contact with the western world 500 years ago, the Indigenous culture has been under attack. In some places, Indigenous people have been dispossessed through violent means; legal procedures have been used in other areas. They have survived so far, but it is not clear that they can survive the final

expansion of western cultures. This final assault will take place on Indigenous lands because they live on the last remaining "wild" lands. Indigenous peoples have been able to maintain their subsistence economies on their traditional land. If Indigenous people are allowed to disappear, the world will lose its last example of sustainable societies. Indigenous people are a visible indication of the status of the western industrialized project. They are measurements of the health and viability of the industrial culture. The fate of the natural world is inextricably linked to the fate of Indigenous peoples because they are part of the natural world.

As ecosystems have been destroyed world wide, so have the traditional cultures of Indigenous people. Although some societies have not been able to withstand the onslaught of such progress, many people have survived. They represent the last remaining vestiges of sustainable societies. To the degree that Indigenous people can be supported and strengthened, they can demonstrate to the industrial world the principles which must be followed if life on the earth is to be preserved. Because Indigenous people have maintained a way of life that is solidly rooted in the earth, they can "express what is insane and suicidal about the western technological project." Rather than dismissing this proposition as "unrealistic" or "romantic", western people must recognize that it is only Indigenous people who have maintained this connection with the earth and that has proved its effectiveness over thousands of years. Indigenous people have kept alive the knowledge and relationships with the land that have become opaque to western people. As a result, they are the key to the future survival not only for Indigenous societies, but to humanity.

Indigenous people are both the poorest of the poor and the holders of the key to the future survival of humanity. The strength of Indigenous cultures has been demonstrated by the survival of Indigenous peoples as distinct in the face of incredible adversity. In spite of 500 years of occupation by societies that are their antithesis, Indigenous peoples have been able to maintain a sense of identity and an understanding of their place in creation. Although some Indigenous nations have perished and many have been displaced from their traditional territories and now make their homes in large urban centres, they have not lost a sense of the source of their strength and identity - the land.

The fundamental characteristic of Indigenous societies everywhere is the respect for the earth and all creation. These understandings form the basis of the relationship with the land that is the source of strength of Indigenous cultures. Indigenous peoples have a strong sense of place; they have a comprehensive understanding of the attributes of the land that sustain them - the wildlife, the plants, the fertility of the soil and the water. They are firmly rooted and committed to the protection and the preservation of particular spaces for future generations. Sustainability for traditional Indigenous peoples means ensuring the survival of the people, the land and the resources for seven generations. Because of their understanding of the need to respect the earth, Indigenous people have much to offer to the identification of sustainable development strategies. The survival of the

planet has been compromised by practices based upon the belief that the earth has an unlimited capacity to absorb pollutants, that the land can be modified and manipulated to change or to increase the carrying capacity of the land. The unequal distribution of the resource, which has historical roots, has resulted in the depletion of resources in certain areas. It is these practices that have arisen from the attitude that is responsible for the damage to the planet's support systems. The earth's destruction is the result of societies having lost a sense of the earth's sacredness.

Non-indigenous societies the world over have reached a "must change" status because the world's ecosystems are no longer able to absorb the massive assault. The traditional philosophies and practices of Indigenous peoples offer an alternative that is sustainable. Western peoples need to re-think their relationships with Indigenous peoples. They must relearn history from an Indigenous perspective and come to terms with the history of relations between Indigenous peoples and the mainstream society. Western people must stop labelling the issues affecting Indigenous peoples as Indigenous issues. They must begin to realize that by defending Indigenous peoples and their lands, they are working to secure their own future as well. The industrial world must wake up to the realities of the state of the world's ecosystems and social systems. Those who have put their faith in continued economic growth, excessive resource use, and technological solutions to environmental problems must realize that nothing less than a wholesale abandonment of the drive for commodity accumulation will save the human race.

Indigenous peoples have always known that the expansionist/materialist western society would eventually collapse under its own weight. They have never wanted to be a part of this new society. Since the beginning of contact with the west, Indigenous peoples have maintained their grounding in the Earth, and have followed the original instructions about how to live on the Earth. Western societies not only rejected the Indigenous world view, they campaigned to remove all traces of Indigenous peoples from the face of the Earth. However, if western peoples are to survive, they must accept the absolute necessity of working toward a sustainable society.

Traditional forms of social, economic and political organization have a great deal to contribute to understanding the requirements of socially sustainable societies. Indigenous peoples are not only the original environmentalists, they are the living examples of truly democratic, classless and caring societies. The Indigenous world view, which reconnects mind, body and spirit, brings a holistic vision to a society that is accustomed to approaching life in a fragmented, compartmentalized fashion. The traditional emphasis on spiritual well-being and the satisfaction of needs rather than endless wants introduces a sense of limits to a culture that has not to date recognized any limits to continued economic growth, technological advancement and material accumulation. The traditional practice of sharing to ensure the well-being of all members of society provides an alternative to the dominant model where wealth is privately appropriated for the benefit of the few.

The concept of inter-generational equity, embodied in the teaching of the seventh generation, points out the necessity of ensuring the survival of future generations to a society whose heavy discounting of the future has resulted in a massive degradation of the world inherited from their parents and grandparents.

Indigenous societies the world over were built on the foundations of true democracy; leaders were selected on the basis of ability and were responsive and accountable; all members of the society participated in decision-making. When the American colonies came together to draw up the constitution for their new country, they turned to the Iroquois Confederacy for a model of democracy since the European culture did not have a history of democracy upon which they could draw. Unfortunately, the colonists primarily adopted the federal structure and not the decision-making process, with the result that the new country did not replicate the true democracy of the Iroquois.

Currently, there is a political crisis in western democracies of massive proportions. Many people do not trust the leaders who have been elected to govern them and have lost faith in the political process itself. Similarly, the hierarchal and bureaucratized and autocratic institutions leave people feeling powerless and alienated. With their traditions of capable and responsive leadership, respect for and equality among all members, the full and equal participation of women, youth and elders, and consensus-based decision making, traditional Indigenous societies have a great deal to offer people who are searching for more appropriate political structures and processes.

The environmental and political crisis is also paralleled by a social crisis. The gulf between the rich and the poor is widening, and the problems that have arisen as a result of poverty are resulting in increasing social instability. The traditional Indigenous forms of social organization based on the extended family system and principles of collective ownership and sharing, mutual respect and helping, the acceptance of diversity, and a collective responsibility for the well-being of all members of society, especially children and youth, the elderly, the sick and those otherwise unable to contribute to the productive process, could form the basis of a caring social-welfare system.

Western peoples should be committed to an international program on Indigenous peoples not simply for utilitarian reasons, but because the injustices committed against them over the history of contact with the West deserve redress. It must be recognized that a program cannot simply focus on those aspects of the Indigenous identity that have utility for the western society, but must come to terms with the day-to-day struggles for justice. Finally, it must be recognized that western society must ultimately confront the unequal distribution of wealth within the world community because environmental preservation and sustainable development are not possible without peace and social justice.

Side Bar Notes: ¹ Indigenous people are both the poorest and the holders of the key to the future survival of humanity.

Other Indigenous Views: Indigenous Knowledge and Water Management in India's Thar Desert
In the difficult conditions of India's Thar desert, Indigenous peoples have been able to evolve a sustainable livelihood around a sophisticated surface water collection system. This system involves water storage facilities, medium sized village pools and underground household water tanks, each facility being forested with vegetable species adapted to such arid conditions. Further, water hygiene rules have been so strictly applied that every form of pollution has been averted. The water harvesting has been coupled with the development of dry-farming technology: wheat cropping in the Khadin soils which retained enough moisture from stored monsoon water.

The genius of the desert people was nowhere more manifest than in their weather forecast skills. They had successfully evolved a system of monsoon prediction, which was of extreme importance for this drought prone region. Long observance of the natural phenomenon and its classification, tested over a long period of history, helped to define a set of thumb rules for predicting the immediate future in terms of good or bad rains. The people thus came to possess a great deal of weather lore in the form of pithy sayings and terse verses. These Indigenous indicators of drought prediction, were woven into the rural folk culture used for prediction purposes. Positive correlation is observed through the behavioural changes among the indicators and the nature of the year predicted on the basis of social indicators, rainfall data and the extent of the kharif crop harvested. This data prepares the farmers socially and psychologically to face drought hazards and to help people in evolving adjustment mechanisms.

A Call To Action : Guiding Principles for Policy Change

An international program on Indigenous peoples and sustainable development must focus on Traditional people, youth and women.

If there is to be a successful program on Indigenous sustainable development, it will be necessary for key actors to develop working relationships with traditional peoples, youth and women, since it is they who have the most to contribute to innovative approaches for Indigenous peoples and sustainable development. Such a program must ensure that the value of the traditional lifestyle is recognized and supported. It must provide opportunities for the documentation, sharing and integration of traditional knowledge within sustainable development strategies. The critical place of Indigenous youth must be recognized since it is the youth who will be responsible for the continuation of sustainable practices. The program must also recognize the critical place of Indigenous women since it is women who are, as the child's first teachers, central agents for the transmission of culture. It is women who are more in touch with the daily realities, who are more action oriented, and who can be found most often in the areas of education, health and social services where more immediate results from programs and services can be seen rather than

in the political sphere. A program with this focus will meet its objectives through both direct and indirect means: directly through the establishment of working relationships between these groups and key actors; and indirectly the recognition of the value of traditional knowledge and the critical role of these groups will strengthen their position to effect change at the local level.

The primary components of an international program for Indigenous peoples and sustainable development should include:

- ▶ 1. protection for the traditional way of life;
- ▶ 2. the documentation, promotion and protection of traditional knowledge;
- ▶ 3. healing programs;
- ▶ 4. education for cultural survival;
- ▶ 5. economic self-reliance; and,
- ▶ 6. the development of a communication capacity.

1. Protection for the Traditional Way of Life

- ▶ **POLICIES AND PRACTICES MUST BE ADOPTED THAT WILL ENSURE PROTECTION FOR THE TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS WAY OF LIFE.**

While preserving the traditional knowledge is an important initiative, what will be most important to the development of sustainable societies will be a commitment to preserve the traditional way of life. The traditional knowledge of Indigenous societies is best preserved through efforts to begin to turn around the forces that have led to the destruction of the traditional way of life. Such a program will not only ensure the survival of Indigenous cultures, it will point the way for the survival of the planet.

Strategic alliances must be formed with Indigenous peoples to defend their lands from all forms of exploitive development, and to advocate for the resolution of outstanding issues, such as treaty and aboriginal rights, land claims, and self-government, where the resolution of these issues will strengthen the capacity of Indigenous peoples to protect the environment and promote sustainable development. These relationships must be built as strategic alliances rather than the more dependent notion of support since it must be recognized that these matters are not just Indigenous issues, but in fact threaten all of humanity.

- ▶ **THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TO DETERMINE THE NATURE AND PACE OF DEVELOPMENT ON THEIR LANDS MUST BE RECOGNIZED.**

Development strategies should be geared to supporting the subsistence economy,

and the use of culturally compatible, convergent/self-reliant economic development strategies, rather than the promotion of mega-projects. It must be realized that traditional Indigenous peoples do not wish to become part of the industrial/technological society; they wish simply to continue to live undisturbed upon their original lands. Projects which are designed to benefit the national economy by exploiting natural resources on Indigenous lands, and which do not benefit local Indigenous peoples, should be abandoned.

▶ **INDIGENOUS PEOPLE MUST BE SUPPORTED TO DEFEND THEIR FROM THE NEWEST DEVELOPMENT THREAT: DUMP SITES FOR INDUSTRIAL, NUCLEAR, MEDICAL AND OTHER TOXIC WASTES.**

Increasingly, the western world turning to Indigenous communities and the developing world to accept its wastes because of their lower environmental standards and growing public resistance in western countries. Under the guise of economic development, companies, municipalities, and cities are preying upon the impoverishment of such communities. Their offers of huge amounts of money to set up incinerators, land fills and other disposal sites encourages short term benefits to overshadow the long term devastating effects to the environment and to human beings. Often, it is only the organized resistance of traditional people within these communities that prevents these projects from becoming a reality. Policies must be instituted to require companies, municipalities and cities to develop capacities to dispose of their wastes in environmentally sound ways that do not exploit already marginalized peoples. On a larger level, fundamental societal changes are required to the consumer culture that generates excessive amounts of wastes. Additionally, nuclear technologies must be abandoned in favour of technologies that are not destructive to the environment and that can be locally controlled.

▶ **TRADITIONAL ECONOMIES MUST BE PROTECTED FROM ENCROACHMENT BY DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY.**

Over the course of thousands of years of occupation and use of their lands, Indigenous peoples have developed technologies that are well suited to local conditions. With integration into the market economy, these technologies have been displaced by technologies designed to increase productivity and facilitate the exploitation of natural resources. Everywhere, modern technology has been promoted as superior to Indigenous technologies; however, much of such technology has had disastrous implications for the subsistence economy and for the preservation of traditional knowledge. Because traditional systems can contribute to the identification of technologies that are locally and environmentally sustainable, Indigenous peoples should be protected from the further encroachment of disruptive technologies.

▶ **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SHOULD GET DIRECT ACCESS TO, AND INCREASED PROTECTION FROM, THE DECISION-MAKING BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.**

Issues relating to the rights and protection of Indigenous peoples should be dealt with on a regular and permanent basis by the United Nations. An international monitoring mechanism must be created by the United Nations with the necessary authority to consider and resolve issues concerning the status of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples must not be prevented by domestic policy from seeking justice in the international arena. They must also have access to adequate resources to carry out an effective campaign at the international level. Traditional people on all continents should be considered endangered peoples to be protected from corporate interests and all levels of government, including local tribal and Indian Act governments.

► **ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES MUST RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AND DEVELOP WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY.**

While it would seem that environmentalist would be obvious allies of Indigenous peoples who are involved in the defence of traditional lands, this is not necessarily the case. Environmentalists and public agencies tend to be concerned with the protection of “wilderness” areas and wildlife, and usually do not realize that Indigenous peoples live in these areas. Most environmentalists and public agencies do not understand that "wilderness" areas are the result of human agency and that the creation of parks, wildlife and forest preserves displaces Indigenous peoples from their traditional territories and disrupts their subsistence livelihood. In our own area, we are aware of cases where Indigenous peoples have been forcibly removed and relocated, and their homes burnt to ensure that they will not return. For the most part, environmentalists are unaware of this history, and of the impact of their proposals on Indigenous peoples. Environmentalists and public agencies must realize that environmental preservation and the traditional subsistence way of life are not mutually exclusive, that in fact the traditional management of the land and resources is a better guarantor of habitat protection than that provided by government regulation. It is a known fact that government regulation has not prevented the illegal harvesting of resources. In many areas, the poaching of wildlife for commercial profit has significantly reduced the size and viability of animal populations. Because the long term survival of people depends upon maintaining the resource base, problems of illegal incursions can be prevented by the careful stewardship that occurs when local people are responsible for land and natural resource management. Current international campaigns to protect endangered species must include protection for the Indigenous people who live there and who are also endangered by the forces that are threatening habitats. Environmentalists and public agencies must begin to realize that without the protection of Indigenous peoples, there will be no habitat protection.

Environmental organizations and public agencies must recognize the necessity of developing working relationships with traditional Indigenous peoples based on the principle of equality, since Indigenous peoples can offer an equal, if different, contribution to the struggle to protect the environment. Environmentalists must

realize that the spiritual, cultural and social perspectives of Indigenous peoples can enhance the approach of environmentalists, which tends to be overly technical. Environmentalists must respect existing Indigenous structures and not expect Indigenous peoples to join their organizations in order to work together.

- ▶ **DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES MUST APPLY THE SAME DEVELOPMENT AID PRINCIPLES WHEN WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY LIVE IN THE NORTH OR THE SOUTH OR IN URBAN RATHER THAN RURAL AREAS.**

Development agencies working with Indigenous peoples in the so-called developed world must follow the same principles that they apply when working with peoples of the so-called developing world. They must recognize that Indigenous populations in industrialized countries share socio-economic and political circumstances that are similar to Third World countries, and therefore have similar development needs. This understanding must be reflected in their policies, programs and budgets. Development agencies should also be working with grass roots groups rather than local government authorities, when dealing with Indigenous development issues.

2. Documentation, Promotion and Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Practices

- ▶ **TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE MUST BE DOCUMENTED AND INTEGRATED INTO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES.**

The source of the knowledge that is invaluable to the development of sustainable societies will be the traditional people who can be found in every community, and who have struggled to maintain a relationship with the land that is respectful of all of Creation, that is not exploitive, that protects the land and resources. The documentation and promotion of such knowledge will create opportunities whereby traditional people can become a contributing force in the community, a force for change. Although often marginalized, traditional people are tremendously important for local sustainability. They represent a rich source of local knowledge as to how to live on the land in a sustainable way. They are knowledgeable about the local resource base - the animals, the plants, the water, the minerals and the soil. In earning their livelihood in a respectful relationship with the land, and raising their children to be proud of who they are, traditional people provide a living example of a sustainable lifestyle.

The traditional knowledge and practices of Indigenous peoples, in all parts of the world, must be documented to ensure that the detailed understanding of ecosystems that has been accumulated over thousands of years is not lost when the last of the old people pass from this world. It must be realized that such traditional knowledge is vast and of immense scientific value. Programs should be developed to research and document traditional subsistence economies including the

practices of hunting and gathering societies, the fisheries management practiced by coastal peoples, traditional agricultural practices, agroforestry and forest management practices, and traditional medicines.

▶ **MECHANISMS MUST BE DEVELOPED TO ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE.**

Respect and protection for traditional knowledge must be secured through mechanisms by which Indigenous holders of knowledge are recognized as proper authorities and are involved in all activities affecting Indigenous peoples, their resources and their environments. Intellectual property rights and other unalienable human rights, including cultural and linguistic identity must be secured for Indigenous peoples. Once these rights are established, they must continue to be protected through joint ventures or partnerships, technology transfer agreements, royalties, licensing agreements, taxes on profits from patents based on Indigenous knowledge, contributions to an international fund administered by Indigenous people, and proper reference in business and transnational code of ethics. Procedures must also be developed to compensate Indigenous people for the utilization of their knowledge and their biological resources.

▶ **TRADITIONAL MEDICINE SYSTEMS MUST BE RECOGNIZED AS THE EQUIVALENT OF MODERN MEDICAL SYSTEMS.**

Traditional healers, traditional health practices and medicines must be respected and receive an equivalent status in official medical programs as that of modern western health practitioners and methods.

▶ **NEW PATTERNS OF INTERACTION BETWEEN RESEARCHERS, INSTITUTIONS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ARE REQUIRED REGARDING ACCESS TO TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE.**

On the one hand, non-indigenous researchers must make available the results of their research to Indigenous people with whom they have worked, especially through dissemination in a form and language accessible to them. On the other hand, research programs must strive to achieve self-learning and self-awareness of Indigenous people while avoiding using them as objects of science. Knowledge should enable transformation of people and communities involved in the research. How to do research, how to create an equal and reciprocal working partnership between Indigenous peoples and non-indigenous researchers and institutions are important questions that require further examination. Research efforts should be rooted in local communities and must provide for the direct participation of the people involved in Indigenous knowledge systems. Indigenous people must retain control over the source and the database of their knowledge systems. Research projects involving Indigenous knowledge should be resourced at the same level as other research projects of similar scientific value.

▶ **THE DOCUMENTATION OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE MUST BE UNDERTAKEN BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND MUST BE CONDUCTED IN WAYS THAT STRENGTHEN INDIGENOUS SOCIETIES.**

There is an existing body of literature on development and Indigenous peoples but it has been written by non-Indigenous academics. Most issues are dealt with in a compartmentalized fashion rather than in a holistic way. While there is literature on Indigenous land and human rights issues, there are few sources dealing with North America. Also, the existing literature, by and large, doesn't recognize Indigenous struggles as issues of development. Indigenous people must be in control of the documentation process from the initial conceptualization through to the production of information products.

Projects to research and document traditional knowledge must be carried out under the control of Indigenous people, and control over the product must remain with the local Indigenous people. Otherwise, Indigenous people and their knowledge will simply be another resource to be exploited by western society. These projects must be carried out in such a way that they strengthen Indigenous societies, rather than simply capturing the knowledge before it disappears.

While the knowledge that has been accumulated by western societies over the course of their history has long been recorded in a written form, the knowledge of Indigenous societies has been maintained as an oral tradition. It is passed on from generation to generation, from the old people to the youth. The intergenerational transmission of knowledge is threatened by the increasing alienation of young people from their culture. The transfer of knowledge from one generation to another is also threatened by the increasing encroachment of western civilization, by the continued industrial assault on remaining Indigenous lands, and by the escalating rates of urbanization. The involvement of Indigenous youth and women in documenting the knowledge of traditional people will ensure that the information is both recorded and used to strengthen Indigenous societies.

▶ **CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE RESEARCH METHODS MUST BE USED IN THE DOCUMENTATION OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS.**

It will be necessary to develop culturally appropriate research methods because the traditional culture is an oral rather than a written tradition. Traditional knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation through the interrelationship with the land, and cannot be understood outside of that relationship. The culture is indivisible; it is a totality reflecting the way of life given to Indigenous peoples and cannot, therefore, be simply an object of academic study. For these reasons, it is critical that traditional people be supported to undertake this documentation process, and to be seen as experts on sustainable development. The documentation of traditional knowledge and skills must provide for the use of a

number of different methods including video and audio tapes, as well as written materials.

- ▶ **THE DOCUMENTATION OF INDIGENOUS HEALTH AND HEALING PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH, WOMEN, MEN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES WILL MAKE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO UNDERSTANDING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

Indigenous groups have developed a range of services and programs that have proven to be successful in repairing much of the damage that has occurred to our people through the colonization process. These programs tend to focus on healing and strengthening the critical role of women, youth and traditional people in the development and maintenance of sustainable societies. These experiences should be documented as part of Indigenous knowledge in terms of how these approaches would assist the development of sustainable societies.

3. Healing Programs

- ▶ **HEALING PROGRAMS MUST BE DEVELOPED TO ENSURE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS TO ENSURE THE MAINTENANCE OF SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES.**

Strategies of human development are critical to address the accumulation of "suppressed sorrow, unresolved conflicts and repressed pain" which are obstacles to healthy development. The colonial experience and the ongoing experience of oppression have robbed Indigenous people of their spirit. Healing is a means of recovery of the spirit, and is a necessary part of the drive for self-management and self-determination. The spirit is recovered through exposure to the culture, through participation in the ceremonies, and through the language, the songs, the pipe and the sacred objects.

Because the psychological, emotional and spiritual damage has been so great, the majority of indigenous people have been unavailable to the development process. The experience has been that once people have had opportunities to heal themselves, they are able to participate more effectively in strategies that focus upon developing the capacity of communities to be self-reliant. Indigenous people find it very difficult to trust and care for others because of the pain they have experienced, and the perceived need to protect themselves. Healing processes should enable people to let go of those defenses, and begin to care for each other and for future generations.

- ▶ **HEALING PROGRAMS ARE ESPECIALLY CRITICAL FOR YOUTH AND WOMEN, BUT MUST INCLUDE PROGRAMS FOR MEN, FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY AS WELL.**

If there is to be any hope of Indigenous survival, special attention must be given to

the generation of youth, for it is they who will ultimately determine whether sustainability survives. Healing programs for women are also critical because they are often in situations where they are raising their children alone, and because they tend to be more involved in areas that are vital to social sustainability - education, social services, and health. However, it is also necessary to provide opportunities for men, families and the larger community to become healthier. Programs are necessary to help youth with drug and alcohol addictions, to break the dependency on government and other similar supports, and to teach them to take pride in themselves and their culture. Spiritual healing has proven to be the most effective approach when working with Indigenous youth and their families. Through this approach, young people begin to understand the historical development of the conditions they face, they learn skills necessary to create positive change in their own lives, and they begin to care about one another.

‣ **HEALING PROGRAMS MUST BE FOCUSED ON THE RE-INTEGRATION OF MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT.**

Experience has demonstrated that the most successful strategy for human development is one that focuses on community healing. This is a method that creates a safe environment for people to acknowledge the pain that they live with, and to understand the source of that pain. Through this process, people are connected to their culture and to each other. Feelings of self-worth and pride in their cultural identity are restored; they begin to care for each other, and begin to carry out their responsibilities to future generations.

‣ **HEALING PROGRAMS MUST BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.**

Governments, development agencies and other appropriate bodies have a responsibility to stop the market in the pain of Indigenous peoples. Too often, non-Indigenous groups are funded to deliver a range of social support services to Indigenous people on the basis that they are a disadvantaged group. Not only does this result in culturally inappropriate services, but the underlying dependency dynamic shaping the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the dominant society is not altered. Notwithstanding that many non-Indigenous people benefit from Indigenous poverty and oppression, and that significant economic benefits would be realized through Indigenous control of the social service delivery system, appreciable change will not occur until Indigenous peoples are personally responsible for, and in control of, their own healing.

‣ **THE “CLIENT” RELATIONSHIP IN HELPING SERVICES MUST BE ELIMINATED IF REAL HEALING IS TO OCCUR.**

The professionalization of helping services is a barrier to healing because the relationship is fundamentally unequal. Often, people who need assistance dealing with life stresses are not prepared to use existing services because the structure of

services requires them to adopt a subordinate position relative to the helper. Real healing only occurs in an environment of equality where, no matter how serious someone's problem, he/she still has something to offer someone else. Equality in helping relationships means recognizing that no-one is without life stresses and no-one is without personal resources that are valuable to others. Additionally, the professionalization of Indigenous social services mitigates against a role for traditional methods and healers, since such services tend to adopt conventional mainstream practices.

- ▶ **IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED THAT RECONNECTING WITH THE LAND IS A CENTRAL PART OF THE HEALING PROCESS, AND INITIATIVES MUST BE SUPPORTED THAT PROVIDE FOR THIS DIMENSION.**

Because of the critical importance of land to the Indigenous identity and well-being, and the critical place of land-use strategies in sustainable development, governments and funding agencies must amend their policies and practices to make access to land a central component of healing programs. Governments in particular should make it possible to create permanent cultural camps and healing lodges on state-owned lands, parks, wildlife and forest preserves.

4. Education for Cultural Survival

- ▶ **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MUST BE SELF-DETERMINING IN EDUCATION IF THEY ARE TO SURVIVE AS DISTINCT PEOPLES, AND THE FULL DECOLONIZATION OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION MUST BE SUPPORTED.**

Education is especially critical to cultural survival because the process of cultural disruption through mind control begins with the children. Regaining control over the education system is critical to breaking the cycle of dependency that perpetuates poverty, and inhibits the full development of sustainable societies.

Currently, there is little Indigenous control of education at any level, especially among urban populations. Even in reserve communities under local control conditions, the level of control exercised does not facilitate the delivery of Indigenous education as much as it gives community control of mainstream education programs. In urban areas, even where the population is large, Indigenous control is practically non-existent. The status of Indigenous peoples relative to the education system can be properly termed "colonial". Indigenous children are still required to attend schools that are designed, administered and controlled by the dominant society. They are taught by non-Indigenous teachers who lack an understanding, or an appreciation, of Indigenous cultures and learning modes. The curriculum they are taught does not reflect Indigenous realities, does not value Indigenous contributions, is often biased against Indigenous cultures, and is sometimes racist. Indigenous elders and traditional people are usually not welcome in these schools, and where they are allowed to participate, they are confined to narrow stereotypical roles.

All aspects of Indigenous education must be transferred to the control of Indigenous peoples. This will necessarily include pre-school, elementary, junior and senior high schools, post-secondary, trades education, adult up-grading and literacy. Where the Indigenous population is of sufficient size to support separate educational institutions, control over all facets of such educational institutions, inclusive of enrollment, staffing, curriculum, administration and the physical plant, must be transferred to Indigenous education authorities. Such schools must be supported to develop their own school divisions. Where Indigenous populations are smaller, consideration must be given to setting up separate classrooms, education programs and institutes under the direction of Indigenous peoples within existing educational institutions. Such programs must be supported to link-up and network with similar programs.

The funding of separate Indigenous schools, education programs and divisions must be equivalent to that made available to non-Indigenous schools and divisions. The funding that is currently provided to the public school system for Indigenous students must be redirected to Indigenous education authorities.

**▶ INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MUST BE SUPPORTED TO REBUILD
INDIGENOUS INSTITUTIONS NECESSARY FOR THE PROTECTION
AND TRANSMISSION OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE.**

There is a critical need to set up the bases for relearning, rejuvenating and reviving Indigenous rationalities, technologies and wisdoms which appear to be necessary for the survival of humanity and Mother Earth. Indigenous cultures have survived the powerful forces of annihilation because of their cultural memory which linked the methods of industry and lifestyles. It is therefore important to help them to rebuild the institutions through which they have been inheriting the cultural memories of the millennium. Strengthening and discovering these institutions of knowledge are essential both for survival and developing models of alternate education. Restoring their confidence in their culture, their history and their traditional values is a critical step on any restoration path. Education programs aimed at rejuvenating or strengthening Indigenous knowledge and providing them with modern tools must be adapted to Indigenous needs and aspirations.

**▶ TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS MUST BE RECOGNIZED AS
EQUIVALENT TO THE KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS OF WESTERN SOCIETIES,
INCLUDING THOSE CONTAINED WITHIN THE INSTITUTIONS OF
HIGHER LEARNING.**

Indigenous knowledge systems must be recognized by higher learning institutions in their education and training programs. The primary beneficiaries of a collaboration between Indigenous peoples and institutions of higher learning will be the Indigenous people themselves in order for them to preserve their culture and knowledge, to ensure their transmission to Indigenous youth and to secure their

livelihood.

Indigenous peoples should be supported to develop their own post-secondary institutions, and credits earned in these institutions should be fully transferable to other post-secondary institutions. Where Indigenous institutions are established within a mainstream academic institution, they must be directed, staffed, and administered by Indigenous people, and must be resourced at similar levels as other institutes within the university.

5. Economic Self-Reliance

▶ INDIGENOUS PEOPLE MUST BE IN CONTROL OF THE BASIC NECESSITIES OF LIFE.

If Indigenous people are to exist in the future as a people, they must have control over their own lives, and the only way that such control is possible is through controlling the provision of the basic needs of life - food, shelter, clothing, health and education. Regaining control over the provision of basic needs is critical to breaking the cycle of dependence that perpetuates poverty. Indigenous people should be supported to produce goods for their own use. Policies and programs are necessary that will lead to Indigenous control over the provision of goods and services to their people.

▶ SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES MUST BE BASED UPON THE ACTUAL FOUNDATION OF INDIGENOUS CULTURES.

It is critical that economic development strategies be based upon the actual foundation of Indigenous cultures, upon the traditional forms of socio-economic organization, values and practices. In particular, mainstream theories of community economic development should be avoided. It should be realized that, although such theory and practice is usually seen as an improvement over strategies based upon individual entrepreneurship, such practice tends to be assimilationist.

Strategies are required that will strengthen extended family networks, that will increase the ability of family systems to be self-managing and self-reliant. Such strategies will facilitate the building of a strong economy based upon family exchange. The strengthening of clans, societies and nations can proceed from the basis of self-reliant families. It must be recognized that special measures will be required to provide for young people who may not have access to strong family systems. This will be particularly important in urban areas.

▶ POLICIES REGARDING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MUST BE REORGANIZED TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATHER THAN WELFARE PROGRAMS WHICH MAINTAIN DEPENDENCY.

Analysis of government budgets relative to programming for Indigenous peoples in North America demonstrates that proportionately more funds are spent on social services than on support for economic development. It must be accepted that social programming alone cannot in itself overcome the social problems that exist, that equal weight must be given to economic development.

It must be pointed out, however, that economic initiatives in themselves will not be the solution if they are not accessible to those who need them most. Past economic initiatives have tended to favour those who were already more or less "successful", and have tended to create an Indigenous middle class. The existence of this small group of people in every community has tended to aggravate social tensions within communities because such private ownership has set up a class dynamic.

A strategy is required that will deliver economic resources to that portion of the community with high social needs. New initiatives are needed that will address both social and economic objectives within a framework that recognizes and builds upon the strengths of the culture. This strategy must be focused upon the extended family system and based upon still vital cultural values. It must provide family systems with ways and means of becoming self-reliant to break the cycle of dependency that has been created over the years.

**▶ GOVERNMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS MUST USE THEIR
PURCHASING POWER TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

Currently, there are few Indigenous businesses at any level, including local, regional, national and international, that have the capacity to supply Indigenous communities with the range of necessary products and services. A blatant example of this is reflected in the absence of indigenous businesses at any level of housing construction, which on reserves accounts for the bulk of construction activity, and the lack of support for self-sufficiency in food. Governments tend to purchase from non-Indigenous suppliers rather than to support the development of Indigenous capacities. Governments must change their policies to support the development of Indigenous businesses to supply goods and services to Indigenous communities, both rural and urban.

**▶ GOVERNMENTS MUST TRANSFER CONTROL OVER
ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.**

Indigenous peoples are seen as a client group, and as a group, support an extensive array of mainstream social service providers and businesses delivering goods and services. Such a situation strengthens the mainstream economy at the expense of the Indigenous economy through the provision of employment and other spin-off benefits; therefore, Indigenous control of the service sector is an important part of the economic development strategy. Governments must change their policies to accommodate Indigenous control of the provision of goods and services to their people. Government funding for existing services must be transferred to agencies

under the control of Indigenous peoples. This principle must apply to all services and to all Indigenous peoples, including those who reside in urban areas.

- ▶ **TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY, ECONOMIC STRATEGIES SHOULD BE BASED UPON THE PRINCIPLE OF CONVERGENCE TO GEAR PRODUCTION TO MEET LOCAL DEMAND AND NEED, RATHER THAN FOR OUTSIDE REGIONAL, NATIONAL OR GLOBAL MARKET.**

In terms of economic strategy, it would appear that a strategy that works towards the convergence of local resource use, demand and need would be an ideal way to counteract the historical processes of underdevelopment. Such a strategy would reduce the dependence upon external demand, external sources of use values, and would protect Indigenous economies from unstable global markets. A convergence economic strategy would also reduce dependency upon aid. This strategy is also consistent with the goals of Indigenous peoples for self-determination and self-government.

- ▶ **POLICIES MUST BE IMPLEMENTED TO STRENGTHEN THE TRADITIONAL SUBSISTENCE ECONOMY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO PROMOTING INDUSTRIAL AND OTHER LARGE SCALE PRODUCTION.**

Modern industrial development has not only failed to provide Indigenous peoples with a livelihood from wage labour, it has also introduced a host of social problems and has impacted negatively on the subsistence economy. Continued production for the global market has maintained the impoverishment of Indigenous peoples. State and institutional policy should be re-directed away from the promotion of such projects towards support for the subsistence economy.

- ▶ **TREATY GUARANTEED RIGHTS TO HUNT AND FISH SHOULD BE ENFORCED.**

Treaty guaranteed rights to hunt and fish are central to many subsistence economies, and were a condition insisted upon by Indigenous peoples when the treaties were signed. Currently, these rights are under assault by individuals and groups who believe that no one should have special rights.

- ▶ **THE NATURAL RESOURCE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, INCLUDING THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITY OF TRADITIONAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AND RESTORED.**

Indigenous peoples had well-developed systems of natural resource management that ensured the conservation of the resource while providing a significant source of sustenance for people. These common property systems have proven to be superior to state management systems which often only give the appearance of regulation and conservation. The recognition and restoration of these rights would make a significant contribution to local sustainability.

▶ **TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC RIGHTS MUST BE PROTECTED AGAINST ATTACKS BY ANIMAL RIGHTS AND ANIMAL WELFARE ACTIVISTS.**

In addition to protecting traditional economic rights from attack by sports hunters, governments must defend the traditional subsistence economy against animal rights /animal welfare activists who seek to impose their values on Indigenous peoples. The success of the efforts of these groups in destroying the market for furs has caused considerable hardship in many Indigenous communities who depended on this source of income to subsidize their subsistence livelihood. It appears that these groups have more concern with the well-being of animals than they have for Indigenous peoples.

▶ **POLICIES MUST BE CHANGED TO PROTECT INDIGENOUS ARTS AND CRAFTS.**

Government policies should be changed to prevent the import of cheaper imitations of Indigenous arts and crafts from Asian and other countries because such imports take income away from Indigenous artists and craftpersons who could be earning a livelihood from their skills.

▶ **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SHOULD BE SUPPORTED TO DEVELOP TOURISM AS PART OF A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.**

There is a growing market for eco-tourism and alternative tourism that could provide a livelihood for Indigenous peoples in ways that are culturally and ecologically sustainable. Such tourism could be a vehicle for promoting an understanding of the issues confronting Indigenous peoples, and could be an important means of promoting the traditional knowledge and practices of Indigenous peoples to the larger society.

6. The Development of a Communication Capacity

▶ **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MUST BE SUPPORTED TO DEVELOP COMMUNICATION LINKS TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE.**

Interactions and partnerships between Indigenous peoples from different regions must be supported in order to promote sustainable resource management, facilitate exchange on Indigenous knowledge systems, promote Indigenous perspectives on sustainable development, and determine both the generalities and the specificities of their coping strategies in various situations of vulnerability and marginalization. An international cooperation of peoples from threatened cultures will go along way to attain material well-being along with spiritual peace. Such interactions will also enable people from marginalized cultures to regain confidence in themselves for their survival.

Support for Indigenous communications would include meeting the capital,

staffing and operating requirements for a range of communication modalities under the control of Indigenous groups at the local level.