

**Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources,
Traditional Knowledge and Folklore**

**Twentieth Session
Geneva, February 14 to 22, 2012**

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM

We, the Indigenous Peoples and Nations present at the International Indigenous Forum during WIPO IGC 20, have evaluated our participation in all of the proceedings of this Committee, and we note with concern the continued reduction of the amount and level of our participation in this process.

We Indigenous Peoples have participated as experts in the IGC sessions, we have worked in good faith, and we have made efforts over the years to submit to the IGC sessions our collectively developed and sound proposals, which have been ignored or left in brackets in negotiation texts.

The IGC, in its overall procedures, has systematically ignored our rights, as Indigenous Peoples and as Nations with internationally recognized collective rights, to self-determination and full and equitable participation at all levels.

The draft study of the Secretariat on the participation of observers before the IGC does not contain modifications proposed by the Indigenous Peoples to WIPO's rules of procedure. The States have obligations under their constitutions that have not been observed in the IGC, nor have they submitted proposals that could resolve the existing deficiencies in order to improve our participation.

Distinguished delegates: we, the Indigenous Peoples, are the titleholders, proprietors and ancestral owners of traditional knowledge that is inalienable, nonforfeitable and inherent to the genetic resources that we have conserved and utilized in a sustainable manner within our territories. For this reason, we appeal to the States to acknowledge that the discussion on intellectual property rights and genetic resources should include Indigenous Peoples on equal terms with the States since the work will directly impact our lives, our lands, our territories and resources, and will reach to the very heart of our cultures, which are the inheritance of future generations.

Therefore, the Indigenous Peoples present at IGC 20 have reflected seriously on our role in this process and have decided, unanimously, to withdraw our active participation in the work developed by this Committee until the States change the rules of procedure to permit our full and equitable participation at all levels of the IGC and until the instruments recognize and are consistent with the existing international frameworks for the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples within the scope of the IGC.

February 21, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.