

Earthkeepers: Women of the Four Directions
A working Group on the Concerns of Women of the Earth
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Statement of Purpose: In the traditional wisdom of many of the indigenous peoples it is said that we have reached a critical time in our evolution. We have a choice to work to mend the sacred hoop of life which interconnects and binds us all, or be witness as our mother, the Earth purifies herself of the cancer we humans have become.

In multi-national forums like the United Nations, the voice of the woman has been little heard, especially that of indigenous women and women of color. Many of the ancient traditions speak of a time when the representatives of the four directions, red, white, yellow, and black, must come together in a circle and begin the process of healing.

Around the world, there are many women who have maintained the ancient indigenous wisdom of their bio-regions. We affirm that this wisdom needs to be heard and acknowledged, together with the knowledge of those women who have studied ways of effecting the dominant culture.

In the Council of Earthkeepers, we envision women of all colors, coming together from the four directions to join together in council to examine issues, priorities of concern to all. Led by the wisdom of the indigenous elders, we shall strive to speak with one heart, with one voice so that we may create a better world for our children and the generations to come. Together, we will seek the preservation of Earth Wisdom, especially as preserved by indigenous wisdomkeepers. We will establish an ongoing network of concern and action that transcends borders; to examine and implement new modalities for effecting local, regional and global policy that affects our bodies, our children, our communities and our environment.

Focus: Convention on the Eliminations of All forms of Discrimination Against Women, Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, NGO Forum for Women, U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, Preparatory Committee for the Fourth World Conference, Input as Major Group for Commission on Sustainable Development, and Implementation of Agenda 21 and other international instruments through the United Nations and NGO Forums.

Objectives: 1) To bring traditional indigenous and grassroots representatives together with policy makers at the NYC Prep Comms and NGO meetings for dialogue, input and consultations. The creation of forums and round table discussions focusing on traditional wisdom.

2) Identify mechanisms for facilitating an indigenous voice at Social Summit PrepComms and to the Women's Beijing conference

3) To create mechanisms for consultations between spiritual, environmental and indigenous leaders, and to focus priorities in light of the coming Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

4) Help create language for Beijing and Social Summit statements on relevant issues.

5) Compile statements of grassroots leaders for inclusion in reports to policymakers

6) Building an enduring cross-cultural network for mutual support on issues which affect us as caretakers of the Earth and her children.

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