

Earthkeepers: Women of the Four Directions
Working Group on the Concerns of Indigenous Women

Memorandum on The Platform for Action of the U N Fourth World Conference on Women
Action for Equality, Development and Peace

- *The role of environment and development can not be considered apart from human rights. The destruction of the environment for development has violated the fundamental rights of indigenous women.
- *The voice of indigenous women must be heard in international conferences. Indigenous women still practice their roles as caretakers of the Earth, the environment and future generations.
- *By affecting women through the pollution of earth, air, water and fire, we are destroying future generations.
- *Major developments like hydro-electric dams have been especially devastating for indigenous women and communities. Diversions of major waterways causes destruction of sustainable ecosystems, earth-based communities, food and medicine, culture and traditions. International environmental review procedures must be implemented before any major power or water projects are initiated.
- *Indigenous women have been oppressed by the patriarchal European colonial system. We affirm the right of indigenous women to practice their land-based spiritual traditions, and to have access to and control of traditional sacred sites.
- *Indigenous herbal medicine and healing practices must be legitimized. Lack of consideration for these modalities has seriously undermined the health and well being of indigenous women and children. Intellectual property rights to these traditional remedies must be retained by the indigenous communities, not usurped by the transnational pharmaceutical corporations.
- *Indigenous women hold the culture and traditions of their people and communities. This source of knowledge is now endangered. Traditional indigenous knowledge, practices, and legacies must be supported through recognition of self-determination. Control of education and information dissemination are vital to indigenous cultural survival.
- *The destruction of indigenous peoples, is the destruction of the Earth. The cry of indigenous women, the cry of Mother Earth must be heard now.

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