

To the United Nations Economic & Social Council
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Sirs, Madams:

We are writing to express deep concern that the Wittenberg Center for Alternative Resources may have its NGO consultative status with ECOSOC affected by procedural changes. This would be especially distressing as we approach the UN Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. For many years the Wittenberg Center has been working to bring the concerns of traditional indigenous leaders to international forums such as the United Nations.

The Wittenberg Center has played a key role in allowing the contributions of Traditional Indigenous Nations to be heard within the United Nations, including opening the doors for these perspectives to be heard at the Cry of the Earth Conference in November 1993.

We wish to point out that the Wittenberg Center was a cosponsor of the Earthkeepers Working Group at both the Women's and Social Summit Preparatory meetings in New York, which presented the only indigenous voices at either of these meetings. At a time when the United Nations is espousing a new partnership with indigenous peoples, this organization's participation is very important.

The Wittenberg Center has also been important in networking information on global policy developments regarding the environment, human rights, and opportunities for grassroots participation. By actions which would jeopardize the effective participation of organizations such as the Wittenberg Center, the United Nations is opposing the principles which it is affirming in world summits such as Rio and Copenhagen.

We submit our concerns that these communications pathways be kept open, and respectfully request that you find mechanisms to insure that organizations such as the Wittenberg Center for Alternative Resources continue its work as an important resource in the United Nations process.

Very truly yours,