

Stockholm Convention COP 6, Geneva, Switzerland April 28-May 10, 2013
International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) Presented by: Berenice Sanchez-Otomi Nahua Mexico

The International Indian Treaty Council, on behalf of its members: nations and peoples of North, Central and South America, the Caribbean and Pacific, calls on Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention to recognize that the serious impacts that pesticides and other dangerous toxins cause in our land, culture and human rights are a form of environmental violence. As Indigenous Peoples we respect our sacred responsibility to defend our Mother Earth, and our future generations. But we face an alarming threat to our lives, lands, natural resources and cultures as well as our rights to self-determination, food sovereignty and human rights in their entirety resulting from the use of pesticides and other toxic products in our territories in all regions of the world.

The International Indian Treaty Council is especially grieved to report the death of many children in impacted communities in Mexico who have been born with serious birth defects due to exposure, directly or through maternal exposure to toxic pesticides. One such child is Juan Antonio Rodriguez Coronado, who was only 2 years old and died on April 11, 2013. He belonged to Pueblo Yaqui of Sonora, Mexico and was born with cirrhosis of the liver. His family home was in the flight path of planes spraying pesticides.

The production, export-import and use of hazardous and restricted chemicals listed as persistent organic pollutants, without the knowledge or the free, prior and informed consent of the peoples concerned, violates a range of human rights of Indigenous Peoples. These rights are enshrined in various international legal standards, including: the rights of the child, to health, to food, to development, to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), cultural rights, the right to be free of racism and racial discrimination, the right to not be deprived of our own livelihoods and the right to Self-Determination, among others. The only existing road is recognition and respect from the States Parties.

We affirm and demand the full implementation now and in the future, of our right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples on the use (in production processes) and disposal of toxic waste. We affirm this right on the basis of its recognition in Article 29 paragraph 2 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states:

"States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent"

Finally, we urge the Parties to consider our serious concerns about the proposed amendment to the rules regarding admission of observers. The proposed amendment of the requirements of accreditation for NGOs create significant barriers to future Indigenous participation. We hope that the Parties exercise their right to decide who attends the Conference of the Parties, and continues to value the contribution of Indigenous Peoples. Please respect the spirit and intent of the Stockholm Convention preamble.

Thank you