



***CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY OF ENGLISH VERSION***

**STATEMENT BY  
MR. LUCIEN WABANONIK  
GRAND CHIEF  
ALGONQUIN NATION COUNCIL (QUEBEC)**

**TO**

**THE EIGHT SESSION OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS PERMENENT FORUM  
ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES**

**NEW YORK, MAY 21, 2009**

**Assembly of First Nations of Quebec Labrador  
United Nations Statement on the Arctic  
May 21, 2009**

Thank you Madame Chairman,

My name is Grand Chief Lucien Wabanonik from the Algonquin Nation Council in Quebec.

As we are all aware many countries are now in a race to reap and plunder the spoils of mankind's unprecedented abuse of our mother earth. Current international dialogue expresses concern as countries are seeking to establish their respective presence in the Arctic region. Much of this dialogue reminds us of our collective history as indigenous peoples.

The climatic changes in the Arctic are having far reaching consequences on the environment, wildlife, fauna, and the indigenous peoples of the north. Our elders have always taught us that we are a part of creation not superior to it, respect and treatment with respect for all things and all beings is held with high regard.

It would seem that there is no code of conduct. There is a responsibility here, for the indigenous peoples of the world to call upon the United Nations, to assume its role as protector of those that are less capable of being heard and listened to.

It is not acceptable that Canada and Quebec content themselves with short term benefit agreements that draw attention away from the long term negative impacts of massive development projects. Such agreements are devoid of any respect for the rights of the indigenous peoples of the north, and devoid of any concern for the sustainability of the seven generations to come.

The indigenous peoples of the Quebec region are very concerned with the Northern Development Plan of the Quebec Government. The Quebec government is proceeding without due regard for the rights of the indigenous peoples of the north. Quebec is content with short term impact benefit agreements that are meant to reduce negative reaction from indigenous communities who are amongst the poorest in the country.

There is much concern over Quebec's conduct as it does not keep any records of the environmental impacts of the mining industry, and in fact uses its loose environmental policy as a selling point to attract multinational corporations. Such conduct and policy is a violation of the UN Convention on Biodiversity.

In conclusion, Madame Chair,

Many indigenous nations of the Quebec region do not have treaties and have never ceded their territory. According to article 26 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, governments must recognise these, and act accordingly as stipulated in 26.3 of the Declaration.

The foreseen development of the Arctic and sub Arctic regions including those territories above the 51<sup>st</sup> parallel is substantive. This development will forever change the environment and the relationship the indigenous peoples of our region have had with their environment.

### **Recommendation**

Therefore in accordance with article 42 of the United Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Rights, we recommend to this Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues, to call upon the United Nations, all its related bodies, including at the country level to promote the adoption, respect and full application of the provisions of this Declaration within Canada.