

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP TO
PREPARE THE DRAFT AMERICAN DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Hall of the Americas
February 24-28, 2003
Washington, D.C.

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LETTER FROM MR. HÉCTOR HUERTAS TO THE CHAIR OF THE WORKING GROUP,
AMBASSADOR EDUARDO FERRERO COSTA

Washington, D.C., February 28, 2003

Ambassador Eduardo Ferrero Costa
Chair of the Working Group
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

The representatives of the indigenous peoples of the Americas gathered at the Special Meeting of the Working Group to Prepare the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, held from February 24 to 28, 2003, in Washington, D.C.,

Considering:

1. That the first reading of the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, of the Organization of American States (OAS), was concluded at this Special Meeting;
2. That the governmental delegates and representatives of the indigenous peoples present at the Special Meeting agree that it is necessary to continue preparing the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and
3. That the right to full, broad, and transparent participation by the indigenous peoples is a basic requirement for ensuring the legitimacy of the Draft Declaration and its adoption,

Reiterate our request:

- A. That the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) renew the Working Group's mandate to continue preparing the Draft Declaration;
- B. That the General Assembly recommend to the Working Group that it ensure full and broad participation by the indigenous peoples in the entire process of preparation and adoption of the Draft Declaration.
- C. We underscore that it is necessary for the Working Group be the body that prepares, reaches a consensus on, and adopts the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, given that the representatives of the indigenous peoples are duly represented therein.

(Signed)

Héctor Huertas, Co-chair of the Indian Caucus

cc: Dr. César Gaviria, Secretary General of the OAS
Chair of the OAS Permanent Council