



**PRESENTATION BY
GRAND CHIEF EDWARD JOHN
TO
MR. KOFI ANNAN
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**United Nations
New York, New York
June 8, 1999**

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Grand Chief Edward John
to
Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary General of the United Nations**

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Dear Sir:

Dignity. Peace. Human Development. Social Justice. Human Rights. These ideals are reflected in various United Nations agreements, charters, conventions, covenants, principles and declarations. But what do they mean to Indigenous Peoples?

Indigenous Peoples look to the United Nations as the conscience of the world, to act on these ideals...to make them a reality.

The history of the Americas is well known. The history of the Indigenous Peoples, the First Nations, is not so well known. And the historic relationship between Indigenous Peoples and those who came and settled this land has not been a very good one. The last several hundred years represent a dark period for us. And like the holocaust of this century, it must not be forgotten.

Time passes. Time heals. We are all on the threshold of a new year, a new century, and a new millennium.

Our people, the Indigenous Peoples of Canada have hopes and dreams. As we move into the next millennium our land, our histories, our stories, our songs, dreams and ceremonies, our families, our languages and our ways of life woven together over the ages are important to us and to our future survival. So too are the technological wonders, the world economy and the environment. It may be that some of our ancient teachings will be of help to the future of all Peoples.

The draft declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the permanent forum for Indigenous Peoples in the United Nations system are initiatives whose time has come. They are not yet reality. Your efforts, as Secretary General, are important to their realization. We ask you to bring your skills and talents to make these a reality.

The Indigenous Peoples of North America will meet this July 20 - 23, 1999 in Vancouver, Canada within the ancestral lands of the Hun' Qua inam speaking Peoples. As is their way and in accordance with their protocol, they have given me the honour to present an invitation to you to participate in and witness this historic gathering.

We come here with good hearts, good intentions and good words. We leave with good hearts and your good words — knowing our voices have been heard.

A wet za!

AKILE CH'OH

(EDWARD JOHN)

GRAND CHIEF, TL'AZT'EN NATION

TASK GROUP MEMBER, FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

DELEGATE, ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS