



Indigenous World Uranium Summit

NEWS RELEASE

Nov. 30 - Dec. 2, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Monday December 4, 2006

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Summit Declaration Demands Worldwide Ban on Uranium Indigenous Groups Honor Recipients of Nuclear-Free Future Awards In Their Efforts to Stop Uranium Development

WINDOW ROCK (ARIZONA), NAVAJO NATION, USA — Individuals, tribes and organizations from Indigenous Nations and from Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Japan, the United States and Vanuatu are calling for a ban on uranium mining, processing, enrichment, fuel use, and weapons testing and deployment, and nuclear waste dumping on Indigenous Lands.

A Declaration (attached hereto) drafted and approved by participants at the Indigenous World Uranium Summit that concluded here on Sunday December 3 states that a worldwide ban is justified on the basis of the extensive record of “disproportional impacts” of the nuclear fuel chain on the health, natural resources and cultures of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration calls attention to “intensifying nuclear threats to Mother Earth and all life,” and asserts that nuclear power — the primary use for uranium — is not a solution to global warming.

"Our Mother Earth needs protection from the destructive forms of uranium if we are to survive," said Manny Pino, a member of Acoma Pueblo and professor of sociology at Scottsdale Community College in Arizona. "Everyday we are at risk from radioactive materials that threaten our future generations. Indigenous people all over the World are saying these threats must end, and they are taking united actions to achieve that goal."

The Summit's more than 350 participants from nine countries and 14 states of the U.S. said they are particularly concerned that nuclear proliferation ignores basic human rights and natural laws.

"Indigenous People have sacrificed enough," said Norman Brown of the Dineh Bidziil Coalition. "From this day forward, we will take actions to restore respect and legal rights for tribal peoples worldwide. This may take us generations, but we have established the framework to do so with the convening of this historic meeting."

Lynnea Smith, a staffer for Eastern Navajo Diné Against Uranium Mining (ENDAUM), which has waged a 12-year battle to stop proposed new uranium mining in the Navajo communities of Church Rock and Crownpoint in northwestern New Mexico, said, "The Summit was held on the Navajo Nation to highlight the fact that uranium mining has had disastrous consequences for our land and people's health, and to recognize the Navajo Nation's historic law banning uranium mining and processing in Navajo Indian Country in the hopes that such actions will empower other tribal communities and governments to follow suit."

Enactment of the Diné Natural Resources Protection Act of 2005 was a focal point of many panelists and presenters, including Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council Lawrence Morgan, and Navajo Nation Council Delegate George Arthur, who sponsored the bill.

The Summit's four-day agenda included a tour of abandoned uranium mines near Diné homes in the Church Rock area, educational panels, film screenings, youth testimonials, and plenary discussions. From those talks emerged the Declaration, which was approved by unanimous consent of the participants. Findings and recommendations specific to the many examples of uranium development's past impacts and potential future effects on Native Peoples are being compiled and will be issued to the public in the coming weeks. Audio and video documentation of the panel discussions, testimonials and plenary sessions is also being generated, and will be available soon on web sites of the sponsoring organizations.

Organizational sponsors of the Summit were Dineh Bidziil Coalition, ENDAUM, the Laguna-Acoma Coalition for a Safe Environment, Nuclear-Free Future Award, Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development, Sierra Club's Environmental Justice Office in Flagstaff, Arizona, and Southwest Information Research Center.

Agency sponsors were the Office of the President of the Navajo Nation; Office of the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council; the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency, Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Department, Division of Health, Division of Social Services, and Department of Resource Enforcement/Navajo Rangers; and the Haaku Water Office at Acoma Pueblo.

Small business sponsors were ExerPlay, Inc., of Cedar Crest, N.M.; LaMontanita Co-op in Albuquerque; Oasis Mediterranean Restaurant in Gallup, N.M.; Rokzoo Screen Printers of Cottonwood, Ariz.; and Tribal Sovereignty T-Shirts of Wheatfields, Ariz. Food preparation was by the Morgan family of Houck Chapter (Ariz.), Navajo Nation, and Pee Wee's Katering Kitchen of Gallup, N.M.

Financial support was provided by Lannan Foundation, the Max and Anna Levinson Foundation, Onaway Trust, Oxfam America, Solidago Foundation, and Tides Foundation.

At the 2006 Nuclear-Free Future Awards ceremony was held at the Navajo Education Center on Friday December 1, Special Recognition Awards were presented to Phil Harrison, Jr., a long-time advocate for compensation for Navajo uranium workers and recently elected Navajo Nation Council delegate, and SRIC, an Albuquerque, N.M.-based group that has provided technical assistance and scientific information on the effects of uranium development and nuclear waste disposal for 35 years.

Other award recipients were:

- ❑ Sun Xiaodi, a former Chinese uranium miner who was jailed in 2005 for exposing unsafe conditions in mines in Gansu Province and who was "disappeared" again earlier this year in retaliation for publicly disclosing those conditions; his award was accepted by Feng Congde with Human Rights in China in New York City.
- ❑ Dr. Gordon Edwards, a Canadian mathematician and co-founder of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, for his work documenting and explaining the impacts of uranium development in Canada.
- ❑ Wolfgang Scheffler and Heike Hoedt, German scientists and activists who invented low-cost solar reflectors for cooking use in many impoverished tribal communities in Africa and Asia.
- ❑ Ed Grothus, a former Los Alamos National Laboratory nuclear weapons scientist who quit the lab in 1969 to advocate against nuclear proliferation and for peaceful resolution of international conflicts.

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