



April 17, 2024
The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary, U.S. State Department
2201 C St NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary, Department of Commerce
14th Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Re: World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Diplomatic Conference on Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge (May 13-24, 2024)

Dear Secretary Blinken, Secretary Haaland, and Secretary Raimondo:

On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization serving the broad interests of tribal governments and communities and the Coalition of Large Tribes, which provides a unified advocacy base for Tribal Nations that govern large trust land bases, we are writing to urge you to utilize the resources of your offices to ensure that the position of the United States government at the upcoming WIPO Diplomatic Conference on Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge is in favor of a legally enforceable international instrument with protections for Indigenous Peoples that are as strong as or stronger than the current draft language of the instrument.

Because government-to-government consultation between the U.S. and Tribal Nations on this international instrument has been inadequate, we want to be clear that NCAI and COLT strongly support:

- an instrument that is adopted at the May 2024 Diplomatic Conference;
- an instrument that is binding; and
- an instrument with protections at least as strong as those currently found in the draft text.

While the United States cannot control the actions of the other Member States, NCAI and COLT urge the United States to lead by example and support a legally binding instrument with meaningful and strong protections for Indigenous Peoples with respect to their genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.

If you or your staff would like to discuss this request further or have questions related to the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Mark Macarro
President, National Congress of American Indians

Marvin Weatherwax,
Chairman, Coalition of Large Tribes

Enclosure: *COLT Resolution #04-2024, Resolution of COLT Support for Robust, Enforceable International Instrument Protective of Indigenous People and Medicines from the Upcoming WIPO Diplomatic Conference on Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge*