



SIXTY-FIFTH SERIES OF MEETINGS OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE MEMBER STATES  
OF WIPO  
(July 9 to 17, 2024)

*“Agenda Item 17 on the Outcome of the Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument Relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge Associated with Genetic Resources”*

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor. I make this statement on behalf of the Native American Rights Fund and its client the National Congress of American Indians.

The recently adopted treaty concerning genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge marks a truly historic outcome: WIPO’s first treaty with provisions that include Indigenous Peoples. While limited in its scope, the treaty is a positive step forward toward addressing centuries of misappropriation and misuse of Indigenous Peoples’ genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.

Article 31 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides that States shall, in conjunction with Indigenous Peoples, take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of Indigenous Peoples’ rights in their genetic resources, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions. The new treaty holds out the promise that Member States in this incremental but significant way will live up to some of the commitments of the Declaration. But to achieve this progress, the treaty *must* be ratified widely and put into force by Member States. The treaty can only be considered a true success once it is in force and operationalized at the national level.

Additionally, it is essential that we bring the ongoing negotiations in the IGC on legal protections for Indigenous Peoples’ traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions to successful conclusion, with the outcome being binding, enforceable legal protections.

Thank you.