Miami, Florida, November 8-12, 1991

As Indigenous people, our lives are intertwined with the natural world. Our creation stories tell of our emergence in traditional homelands, which continue to nurture and give meaning to our lives. We are inseparable from the lands in which we as peoples were created.

We view our responsibilities to care for the earth as our mother. As Indigenous peoples, we are witnessing the destruction of our sacred Mother Earth. She is being raped as the forests are clear-cut, gouged in the search for minerals, and poisoned by radioactive and chemical waste as we as her children are being destroyed in the ruthless search to seize her precious gifts for human consumption. The suffering and pain of Mother Earth is felt by us as if it were our own. She is being destroyed, as we are being destroyed, at a rate in which it is impossible for healing and renewal.

As Indigenous peoples, we have lived in our traditional homelands for tens of thousands of years in harmony and balance with all of the natural world. We believe that all living things were given life by the Creator, and as such we are all co-equal beings sharing the gifts of our sacred Mother Earth. We are dependent upon her for our sustenance, interdependent upon one another for the fulfillment of our lives, and interconnected with each other spiritually and physically. As human beings, it is our responsibility to care for each other and all living things with the same love that the Creator showed in giving us life. We were born into the world to evolve as fully living, caring, and compassionate beings and to share these gifts with all living things. The Creator gave us natural laws to instruct us in the way in which we must live upon the earth so as to live in harmony and balance with all of life, taking only what is required for our survival and acknowledging these many gifts of life which were given so that we may live.

**A Path to the Future**

Today we face the destruction of the human spirit and the consequent destruction of the natural world. In human beings’ search to fulfill physical and material desires, we are sacrificing the earth and the natural world peoples. In order to cease this destruction, it is incumbent upon all human beings to:

1. Recognize that all human actions, laws, and policies must be informed by an ethic based upon adherence to the laws of the natural world that govern creation and which are embodied in the spiritual traditions of Indigenous peoples.

2. Include a long-range perspective in our ethic that ensures a positive impact on the next generations of all living things.

3. Recognize that honoring and protecting the diversity of life must include not only the plant and animal world but also the diversity of peoples and the spirituality, cultures, and ways of life inherent within.
4. Recognize that all of life is sacred, co-equal, and entitled to existence apart from any relationship to human beings.

5. Protect the rights of Indigenous peoples to our homelands and ways of life to ensure our continuation as peoples living in the manner in which we were instructed by the Creator.

6. Reflect the love of the Creator in our lives, and in our daily thoughts, feelings, words, and actions be mindful of our impact upon all living things and make clear choices that support life rather than destroy it.

The true challenge of human beings is to place our full attention upon ways in which we can live upon Mother Earth in a manner consistent with natural law and in peace, harmony, and balance with all living things.