

**KOUEVI G. Ayitégan**

Doctor of Law

LAWYER

Expert to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, representing  
AFRICA

---

October 15, 2002

Dear Colleagues and Friends,  
Dear Sisters and Brothers,

It is with emotion and sadness that I deliver this message, on this historic day that sees experts, activists and researchers reunited from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, 2002 in order to discuss Indigenous issues in the Cape, South Africa.

I am honoured to have received the invitation of the *Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit*, but unfortunately, I am unable to accept it due to the grave situation which keeps me here this week.

On the opening day of this meeting, allow me to join my thought with yours, and to extend my gratitude and wish you the very best success in your work.

I would also like to congratulate the organizers of this meeting for taking the initiative to engage the States of the Commonwealth in adhering to the general process of the promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous peoples.

I hope that this meeting will allow us all to open the door to a dialogue with all peoples, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, so that we might live and prosper together for the benefit of future generations.

Altogether, for the same cause!

***Dr KOUEVI Ayitégan G.***

*Lawyer*

*Expert to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues- AFRICA*

The CPSU wishes to thank Ms Caitlin Sainsbury, Intern, Native Law Centre of Canada/Institute for Law and Religion, University of Vienna, Austria.