**CBRA Indigenous Statement “Making A Promise”**

On the occasion of the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association Meeting of February 19 to 22, 2018 the Indigenous Circle assembled made a promise and commitment to participate in the world network of UNESCO’s internationally designated biosphere reserves. We encourage everyone within the CBRA family to refer to UNESCO’s Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples, 2017.

http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002587/258772e.pdf

*We are part of nature. We are the water. We are the earth. We are the air. We are the elements governed by natural law.*

As such, on the basis of our empathic cultures, knowledge and traditions, Indigenous peoples have an inherent ethical responsibility to protect biodiversity in our territories. Maintaining balance with the natural world through sustainable land use is a core value of our living philosophies and universal obligations that has been recognized in national and international treaties.

These values are reflected in AICHI Biodiversity Target 18 that states:

*By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels,*

— and —

AICHI Biodiversity Target 11 that states:

*By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.*

Our shared objective as the Indigenous Circle is to ensure that the “voices” of the water, the land, the air, and all things guide the principles of CBRA endeavours. Based upon the principles of respect, equity, and empowerment, Indigenous peoples must be valued and have direct participation as partners in the processes, programming, and governance of the organization, and the resources required to ensure full participation, which includes “planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation” (Lima Action Plan, 2016).
For the benefit of a sustainable future for all our descendants, we call upon leadership at all levels of government and civil society, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, municipal, provincial, federal, UNESCO and the UN, to accept responsibility for the health and well being of creation.

*Kyrrah Mitchell*  
Mount Arrowsmith

*Julie Servant*  
Frontenac Arch

*Tammy Dorward*  
Clayoquot Sound

*Anthony Johnston*  
Redberry Lake

*Michelle Watson*  
Redberry Lake

*Tom Johnson*  
Fundy

*Hugo Mailhot Couture*  
Lac Saint-Pierre

*Thomas Johnson*  
Bras d’Or Lake

*Tim Johnson*  
Niagara Escarpment

*Laura Buck*  
Fundy

*Raven Nixon*  
Fundy

*Patrice Bellefleur*  
Manicouagan Uapishka

*Taylor Judge*  
Georgian Bay

*Nihtta Bezha*  
Tsá Tué

*Lawrence Mitchell*  
Mount Arrowsmith

*Marilyn Capreol*  
Georgian Bay

*Chief Michael Recalma*  
Mount Arrowsmith

*Larry McDermott*  
Niagara Escarpment