

Tribes and Sustainable Development Workshop
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Positioning Tribes as Economic Competitors

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National Congress of American Indians



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Congress of
American
Indians

PROTECTING TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY SINCE 1944



A UNIFIED VOICE FOR INDIAN COUNTRY



National Congress of American Indians

- Founded in 1944.
- Serves the broad interests of tribal governments and communities.
- A representative congress of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.
- United to protect and enhance treaty and sovereign rights while securing our traditional laws, cultures, and ways of life for our descendants.
- Advance a common understanding of the rightful place of tribes in the family of American governments.

Themes

- Unique Status of Tribes and Native Peoples
- Context for Current Issues – Some History
- Economic Systems – Past and Present
- Trends and Issues
- Frameworks for thinking about development

Unique Status of Tribes and Native Peoples

- Tribes are governments – third sovereign in U.S.
- Unique history and relationship with federal government
- Tribes are kinship networks
- Tribes are cultural groups
- Tribes are employers
- Reservations are homelands, land and natural resources are fundamental to understanding
- Reservations are economic systems

- Tribes are part of the U.S. “family of governments.”
- Unique legal status founded in U.S. Constitution, nation-to-nation treaties, federal statutes, case law, executive orders and other administrative policies
- Native people are defined politically – but policies may be racially motivated
- U.S. deals with tribes as governments, not as special interest groups, individuals or as other non-governmental entity
- State governments also explicitly recognize the governmental status of tribes

- Land Rich, Dirt Poor
- Tribes collectively own almost 100 million acres
– 4th largest state behind AK, TX and CA
- Indian lands today comprise about 5% of total land – and 10% of the country's energy reserves and significant energy potential
- Meet 20% of the nation's energy needs with wind power
- 4.5 times the energy needs with solar power

- Pre-Columbian Period: Pre-1492
- Colonial Period: 1492-1828
- Removal, Reservation, Treaty Period: 1828-87
- Allotment and Assimilation Period: 1887-1934
- Indian Reorganization Period: 1934-1945
- Termination Period: 1945-1968
- Indian Self-Determination Period: 1968-?
- New Era of ... Recognition, Promises Kept: 2011-?

Economic System – the decisions, activities, structures, laws, and institutions, guided by the values of a particular peoples/culture, that guide the distribution of resources to meet needs and wants.

- **Traditional**
- **Centrally-Controlled – Federal**
- **Centrally-Controlled – Tribal**
- **Mixed**

Sectors of the Economy

- Government
- Business
- Non-Profit
- Informal

Trends

- Nation-Building/Self-Governance
- Citizenship/Civic Engagement
- Non-Profit Growth
- Younger Population
- More engagement with local, regional and state governments

- Trust Relationship
- Nation-to-Nation/consultation
- Federal Budget
- Government Capacity
- Human Resources
- Infrastructure
- State/Tribal Relations
- PR and Education

State-Tribal Issues

- Jurisdiction
- Dual Citizenship
- Taxation
- Devolution
- State Fiscal Policy
- Mutual Benefit

Final Thoughts

Frameworks

- Elements of Development
- Action Framework

Resources

- www.ncai.org
- www.ncai.org/about-tribes
- www.ncai.org/about-tribes/indians_101.pdf

NATION TO NATION RELATIONSHIPS

