Tribes and Sustainable Development Workshop
Albuquerque, NM
July 26 and 27, 2012

Positioning Tribes as Economic Competitors
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National Congress of American Indians
Protectorg 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 descendents.
• 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
Nation-to-Nation Relationship

- 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
Challenges / Issues

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

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