



Transmitted electronically

August 11, 2020

José Perurena López
President
International World Games Association
Avenue de la Gare 12
1003 Lausanne
Switzerland

Dear President López,

On behalf of the undersigned Tribal organizations, we write to request that the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team be deemed eligible to compete in the 2022 World Games in Birmingham, AL. Despite representing the sovereign Nations that comprise the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and placing third in the men's world championships, the International World Games Association (IWGA) has made the incorrect determination that the team is not qualified to compete. The Haudenosaunee—a confederacy of six Nations: Seneca, Onondaga, Mohawk, Oneida, Tuscarora and Cayuga—*invented* the game of lacrosse and revere it as a medicinal game gifted from the Creator. In addition to being played for enjoyment, recreation, healing, and dispute settlement, it holds deep spiritual meaning and significance. It is fundamentally unjust that the Nations who gifted the Creator's Game to the world are being denied the opportunity to compete on the world stage and in our ancestral lands. In recognition of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's sovereign status, we urge you to reconsider this decision.

Tribal Nations have existed on this continent since time immemorial, predating the formation of the United States. Our governments have been recognized over hundreds of years by world powers through a variety of means, including treaty-making. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy is one of the first and longest-lasting participatory democracies in the world. It entered into treaties with the Dutch, French, and English—all prior to the United States becoming a nation. As the United States was founded, it looked to the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's Great Law of Peace in forming a political union and drafting its constitution, which acknowledges and affirms Tribal sovereignty. Tribal Nations, including the six Nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, have endured centuries of attempts to erase our governments, traditions, and identities. We remain

political powers, retaining our inherent sovereignty, and engaging in diplomatic relations with the United States and internationally.

The Iroquois Nationals are a member in good standing of World Lacrosse and have been recognized as a member nation by the Federation of International Lacrosse since 1987. Among nation competitors in the Lacrosse World Championship, only the Iroquois, Canadian, American and Australian teams have ever placed in the top four. Even the IWGA's website recognizes that the team, "represents the Iroquois Confederacy in international competitions." The Iroquois Nationals are competing throughout the world on behalf of the six sovereign Nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. They are a symbol of the strength and resilience of all of Indian Country—the very survival of our cultures. It is unclear, then, why the team should be prevented from competition at the 2022 World Games.

We are encouraged by the recent joint statement indicating that the IWGA and its partners are currently considering whether to change the format of the 2022 World Games in order to include the Iroquois Nationals. We stress, however, that this is not an issue of inclusiveness, but rather one of respect for the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the long history of self-government by the Nations it comprises. As Leo Nolan, Executive Director of the Iroquois Nationals, has stated, "This is more than a game. It is our heritage, our history, our medicine and our sovereignty." Please count our organizations as partners in your efforts to better understand the unique circumstances and history of Tribal Nations, sovereignty, and our story of perseverance against the greatest of odds. As the United States and other nations are engaged in a reckoning with the injustices of the past, the IWGA and its partners have the opportunity to be on the right side of history. We urge you to commit to a more honorable and just global community—in the world of sports and beyond.

Sincerely,

United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF)
National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)
National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA)
Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA)
Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes (MAST)
Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP)
The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED)
National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH)