Session Title: Transitional Economies: Shifting the Paradigm with Forest and Freshwater Foods.
Session Date: Friday, November 14, 2014

Key Messages from presenters:

• Introductions Leon Simard, teaching background. Family fishing family, mother was part Scotch so he picked up a lot of skills through her in gardening and such. Diabetes Initiative, his work with kidney dialysis and diabetes led him to the topic of Food Security. So their organization has been centered around growing food and food security. Now they are stepping back and looking into some of the research. Just by doing simple surveys they get enough information.. Job is a Food Security Coordinator. Once people have grown a garden they are wondering well now what do we do with this food? So the learning extends to food preservation and seed preservation etc. So what they do is helping others to really think about what they are eating. They did a lot of berry picking etc. It’s really critical that we step back and start engaging students to start learning this.

• Food security is not recognized within the First Nation community and politics

• 7th fire prophecies – if we do not live within that law then there will be some sort of repercussion.

• You live in balance not for material gain. Four dimensions – medicine wheel. Indigenous knowledge is a way to work with other sources of knowledge to heal Mother Earth. Bring western knowledge and our traditional knowledge together to heal this earth. You need to look at the whole package. When you acknowledge your responsibilities than those rights come. How we celebrate life is to live healthy. Have a good meal then we have good meetings. At family level, community level, tribal level. Good food means good meetings means good results. All of creation. Semantics of English language creates barriers. Diff. between food security and food sovereignty. Food Security – Canada food guide has been met. Food Sovereignty – Ceremonies, looking at medicines, animals, trees, for me this is my church when I go out and I hunt. This is what it means in terms of my spirituality.

• These are the kind of discussions that need to happen.

• When Government makes decisions around food security no one really knows what the issues are.

• Want First Nations to participate in monitoring of the Fisheries and Oceans. Engaged in the monitoring. Provide training for species identify specific training so that there could be some engagement with food security. Sharing of food. Fish is not some kind of commodity but a way of life. Important that we remember that in the conversations around food security that there is a whole group of people who live in harmony with food and nature. And we can really learn from these people. There is a network of food security that we don’t realize. If anybody can teach the world why fish is food it’s the First Nations. They would be the greatest teachers.

• Food security takes a new meaning when you are paying $6.50/lb. So had to learn how to be more sustainable with the food that is around.

• Permafrost up north is now melting very fast. Willows are just growing so fast. Taking over the caribou food. Labrador , used to have hundreds or thousands of caribou and now depleting. Now they are seeing the caribou up north in Yukon depleting. All those ancient methods are
coming out. Many are coming to elders now and coming to them to survive. For the last 30 years they have been fighting corporations. They have no more time. It is a waste of time. Need to go home and collaborate and work at home. Big challenges up ahead in respect to food and water. How are Indigenous People going to advice food security issues? Food Secure is an incredible organization. We need to work together to assist FN to go back home and work with our people. And then it will grow into a food wide policy of some sort. Need to work collaboratively to develop micro management policies in the home territories.

• Community members everybody were gardeners. Growing up there was no store. We had to grow our own food. Running water – we had to run down to the stream to get running water. Learned how to prepare fish at a young age. Teaching kids about respect and honour. Respect the food. Use all parts of food. We eat it. If we don’t eat it we bury it. Just to honour it. Respect everybody. Community ice fishing. Teach people how to set up nets on the ice. Conservation Authority took net. Wanted their fish back. Said that their fish got away. We weren’t too happy with that. But we don’t want to start anything with anyone. We want to be able to work with people.

• Food is a story to all of us that is very complex. It is a rich story. Food Security is a multi dimensional thing. Spirit, Ancestors were mentioned. Our ancestors remind us how important food security is in our lives.

• We should have left them in peace. Need more participation from First Nation from the south of Canada.

Discussion Highlights: Started with a Circle of Discussion to introduce each other. All participants participated.