



STATEMENT DELIVERD BY MEXICO ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF FRIENDS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FOR THE GENERAL DISCUSSION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

New York, 17 October, 2016
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madame Chair:

I have the honor to make this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples, composed of Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Norway, New Zealand, Spain, Paraguay, Peru, and my own country, Mexico.

The Group of Friends welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Ms Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, and the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the status of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples.

We thank Ms Tauli-Corpuz for highlighting the strong correlation between safeguarding biodiversity and the effective implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Group of Friends takes this opportunity to reiterate its commitment to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, on this, the eve of its tenth anniversary.

We recognize the value of working in partnership with indigenous people to protect our shared biodiversity and will continue to support the effective participation of indigenous peoples in the design, implementation and monitoring of conservation initiatives. We agree that we must learn from indigenous traditional conservation practices and continue to transfer technical skills that enable indigenous peoples to engage in conservation management.

Turning to the report on the status of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples, as we pass the thirtieth anniversary of the Fund [in 2015], we must recognize and celebrate its achievements. The Fund has supported the participation of more than 2,000 indigenous representatives in major decision-making processes at the United Nations.

The Fund has indirectly contributed to the development of international human rights standards related to the protection and promotion of indigenous peoples' rights, giving a voice to many indigenous representatives who would not otherwise have been able to contribute to these key discussions that directly affect their lives.

We encourage all States and potential donors to contribute to the Fund so that it may continue to support the participation of indigenous peoples in international processes that directly impact on their lives.

Importantly, the Fund has supported indigenous peoples' engagement in the very process that aims to enhance their participation in discussions at the United Nations. The Group of Friends would like to reiterate the significant value that its members place on the direct engagement of indigenous peoples in this process.

We commend the former and current Presidents' of the General Assembly, and the four advisers chosen to progress indigenous participation, for their commitment to this process and for the open and transparent manner in which they have managed the consultations.

We strongly support the latest compilation as a true representation of the broad range of views expressed by States, indigenous peoples and civil society throughout the consultation process. The compilation highlights a number of areas of convergence and we remain confident that together we will reach an inclusive outcome by the end of this current session of the General Assembly.

We urge Member States, indigenous peoples, civil society and the UN Secretariat to redouble efforts to ensure that the greatest possible number of indigenous peoples can continue to have their views represented until the conclusion of this important process.

Finally, we take this opportunity to welcome the UN Human Rights Council's request for the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to undertake a global study on best practices and challenges related to discrimination faced by indigenous peoples in business and access to financial services, in particular indigenous women entrepreneurs. This study provides an important opportunity to ensure that indigenous entrepreneurs can fully contribute towards global economic discussions, policies and initiatives that impact them.

We thank you, Madame President.