



**STATEMENT
BY THE
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**ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

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**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HUMAN RIGHTS
Human Rights**

Madam Chair,

Thank you for this opportunity for me to present on the position of Guyana's implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Constitution of Guyana, laws and policies underscore the "equality of all peoples" and explicitly prohibit discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, gender and religion; not in law, not in policy and not in action.

Amerindian are represented on the five Constitutional Rights Bodies, the Indigenous Peoples Commission and the Ethnic Relations Commission offers direct opportunities for Amerindian to have recourse to address discrimination and rights issues affecting them.

The Amerindian Act #6 of 2006, provides for the guarantees of Amerindian land rights, self-determination within the State of Guyana subject to state sovereignty, mindful that there is no right to succession which is in keeping with Article #46 of UNDRIP.

Madam Chair, the Government continued focus on Amerindian land rights and ownership is a major achievement; Of the 110 Amerindian communities 98 have been awarded absolute grant and the successes of the demarcation programme has resulted in the demarcation of 77 of the 98 titled area.

The Amerindian Titling and Demarcation Project (ALT) 2013 – 2015 is expected to complete all titling and demarcation of Amerindian lands, funding is provided from the Guyana REDD + Investment Funds (GRIF). Allocations this year amounts to G\$77.8 million dollars to advance the completion phase of 12 communities and the demarcation of 8 titled villages.

Self Determination, Decision making and FPIC

Article #4 of the Amerindian Act provides for the establishment of locally elected village councils, whose mandate is to ensure good governance and management and use of land and natural resources in their respective villages.

Guyana has a track record of inclusionary governance and at no time in Guyana history was there such a high level of participation of indigenous leaders and people's in the body politics of our country. In short Indigenous peoples speak for themselves and freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Participation and the informed voice of the Amerindians are identified in all the major national strategy legislative and developmental fora. Amerindian organisations and the National Toshias Council continue to lend informed voices to formulation, revision and updating of the Low Carbon Development Strategy, which aims to transform Guyana's economy while combating climate change.

The next major step for Amerindian currently is the discussion and approval of the "opt-in mechanism" towards the LCDS of which consultation is ongoing. This process will establish rules by villages decide whether or not to opt-in.

Economic social and cultural development

The main streaming of Amerindian village economies development are dependent on the decisions of the communities; priorities are captured in the Community development plans of 166 villages, and communities. The GOG has committed to provide the investment funds in support of the economic initiative of the villages.

Government allocated funds this year's to finance an innovated project for Amerindian youth empowerment. The objective is to advance youth capacity building, increasing skills and capabilities through apprenticeship and entrepreneurial initiatives for community development.

The Government of Guyana has declared a month for the nation to celebrate the diversity of its indigenous nations, as well as their traditional and cultural heritage.

Consideration to gender issues and domestic violence, the indigenous population including women and girls are targeted to benefit from gender based interventions; through a national dialogue on domestic violence and a stamp it out campaign country wide and the national plan of action on domestic violence based on the legislative framework.

In closing, Madam Chair, I am proud to announce that the Government of Guyana, stands firmly on the side of our country's indigenous peoples and while the achievements are measurable, we still have a lot of work to do amidst the challenges in bridging gaps and obtaining policy objectives. To this end all stakeholders are encouraged to seriously contribute to greater tolerance, respect and recognition for the rights and development of Guyana's indigenous peoples.

I THANK YOU.