



**STATEMENT AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES (WCIP)**

UNITED NATIONS, NY

22 -23 SEPT 2014

CHAIRPERSON

1. I am pleased to take part in this interactive round table discussion which will enable us to measure progress made in the implementation of the Declaration adopted seven years ago.
2. At the outset, let me reiterate that, following the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in September 2007, Namibia's understanding remains that nothing in the Declaration shall be interpreted in any way to mean that measures adopted by States for securing equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and individuals created, as a consequence, any new, separate rights. This is because most people in Namibia and in Africa as a whole are indigenous. This was affirmed by the African Union Decision 141 of January 2007 regarding the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and states, and I quote, the African Union "Affirms that the vast majority of the peoples of Africa are indigenous to the African Continent", end of quote.
3. Chairperson, let me point out that in accordance with the Namibian Constitution, all Namibians are guaranteed of their fundamental rights and freedom. Faced with the stark inequality that stems from our historic past, the Government of the Republic of Namibia has put in place its development blueprint called Vision 2030. This is aimed at bringing about development and prosperity for all Namibians, including those formally marginalized.
4. The overarching objective of this development plan is to tackle poverty and to put the country on a trajectory to prosperity. Despite the challenges involved, we are determined to forge ahead as these efforts are also in line with our obligations under the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, and other relevant international instruments, as well as the Millennium Development Goals.

Chairperson,

5. As I mentioned earlier, Namibia hails from a historical background of ethnic segregation and racial discrimination. The challenge for the government has been enhancing national prosperity and cohesion. To that end in 2005, the Government of the Republic of Namibia introduced a Development Special Programme to integrate the previously marginalised communities. This Programme enjoys top government priority and is

situated within the Office of the Prime Minister. In order to ensure its effective implementation, various structures have been established at regional level to ensure that communities have access to support within their respective areas.

6. Since the inception of this Programme, many projects have been implemented in consultation with these communities. These include the assistance and support to learners at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. In this year alone approximately 453 learners from these communities have enrolled at various levels. Furthermore, and within our land reform programme, the government has provided land for farming and resettlement of these communities. Approximately, over 890 households have been resettled on these farms, while over 131 households have been resettled on communal lands since 2005. These communities have been provided with housing, water, and electricity. Health facilities have also been availed on these farms.
7. Employment is also being facilitated for young people from these communities in the Ministries, private sector and National Youth Services, and others.
8. I am happy to inform that this Programme continues to enjoy the positive support from local business people and multilateral organisations such as the ILO and the Spanish Corporation (AECID).
9. In conclusion, Namibia reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in accordance with our Constitution.

I thank You