



HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases including others such as diabetes are obstacles to development and pose a challenge to the achievement of MDGS. HIV/AIDS is fast becoming predators of indigenous communities and most of them are sadly unprepared to protect themselves from the pandemic. Member States made an undertaking last Fall to fully implement the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS through stronger leadership, the scaling up of a comprehensive response to achieve broad multisectoral coverage for prevention, care, treatment and support, the mobilization of additional resources from national, bilateral, multilateral and private sources and the substantial funding of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria and HIV/AIDS component of the work programmes of the United Nations system agencies and programmes engaged in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Fiji looks forward to the outcome of the High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS that will be held at the end of this month with the adoption of the Political Declaration

The achievement of the goal of sustainable development, through the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation is essential for the indigenous societies. Concrete actions and measures to enhance international cooperation need to be implemented under the Rio principles.

In this regard indigenous societies must take prime responsibility for their own development and these have to be equated with the implementation of government policies and strategies towards sustainable development. Towards this end, there has to be a well defined partnership between Governments and the indigenous people to ensure that views and recommendations are considered in a process of dialogue and cooperation.

As we launch the Program for Action of the Second World Decade of the World's Indigenous People, we need to be reminded of the tough but challenging journey ahead of us. It is our collective responsibility as Members of the United Nation to work together in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to implement programs that would alleviate poverty and improve the standards of living in indigenous societies. Fiji also looks forward to the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the General Assembly later this year.

Thank you, Madame Chairperson.