

Saniri Alifuru  Alifuru Council

Tenth session of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
Geneva, July 12, 2017

Agenda item 7: Indigenous Peoples' participation in the United Nations system

Delivered by: Ghazali Ohorella

Thank you Mr. Chair,

We would like to support the statements made by Indigenous Peoples that were presented today, they were very clear and there is no reason to repeat what has been said, particularly the statement presented by Grand Chief Willie Littlechild. Also we appreciate the constructive statements from some of the States. But we also note the silence of the other States that are here, or actually should be here.

A concern that was voiced during the consultations held in New York the past months, has become a reality, as the silence was traded in for a sound deafening ambush during the intergovernmental process - when we're not in the room. We are thankful of a number of States that are championing the position of Indigenous Peoples, and are disappointed with the stance of certain member States as they are not ensure the full, effective, and equal participation.

It is clear that Indigenous Peoples want to have a dialogue in all processes that affect us, we asked States to listen to us, and we wanted to know - still want to know - clearly where they stand so we can have a dialogue. That is why we are here.

In this regard we emphasize our call for partnership and mutual respect between States and Indigenous Peoples, emphasizing that States should consult and cooperate in good faith with Indigenous Peoples if the international community wishes to arrive at a constructive result with genuine improvement of the status of the world's Indigenous Peoples equal, direct and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions is essential.

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We have participated in the World Conference, its modalities resolution, its Outcome Document, its consultations, and these are all at General Assembly level. We have contributed consistently, efficiently and effectively, and demonstrated that we can work at the General Assembly level.

These achievements are all major accomplishments for the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and that it is the result of an inclusive and transparent process of dialogue and negotiation among and between Member States and Indigenous Peoples, and urge States to continue this established practice, to ensure implementation of these minimum standards of the Declaration, by securing Indigenous Peoples' full and effective participation throughout all stages at all levels.

We are not here to look for ECOSOC status, we already have that, we have earned our place within the United Nations and we want to keep that seat and build upon that for the betterment of humanity, States should not try to use our ambition to reduce us.

This process has come to a point that we have to guard the Alta Outcome Document, and protect the bottom line that it does not go below the UN Declaration and urge Indigenous Peoples as well as States to protect that bottom line.

Thank you Mr. Chair.