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Permanent Mission of Germany  
to the United Nations

**Eight Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

**Statement by Ambassador Dr. Martin Ney**

**Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany**

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Madame Chairperson, Excellencies, Representatives of Indigenous Populations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

Respect of and support for the rights of indigenous peoples has been and remains a major objective of German economic and development cooperation. Germany voted in support of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and takes their interests into account in the framework of her bilateral political talks with countries with indigenous population. German development cooperation and human rights projects aim at strengthening the rights and improving the living conditions of indigenous people as well as reinforcing the networks of indigenous organisations at national and crossborder level.

I am particularly pleased to announce that Germany will again contribute this year to the Indigenous Trust Funds with an amount of 50.000 USD. I think this demonstrates our engagement in promoting the participation of the indigenous population representatives to important events like the Permanent Indigenous Forum as well as our support of the objectives of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

Madam Chairperson,

In 2006 the German government adopted a strategy paper entitled "Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean". The explicit aim of the German development cooperation is to assist indigenous peoples in articulating, exercising and asserting their right to self-determined development. The strategy paper is a binding guideline for German government implementing organisations in their Latin America operations.

In implementation, Germany adopts a two-pronged approach: First, this approach actively strengthens indigenous organisations, in the Amazon Basin, the Andean Highlands and Guatemala. Secondly, it also supports indigenous peoples and their organisations through a multisectoral approach. Respect for the rights and needs of indigenous peoples is mainstreamed in all German development cooperation activities in Latin America.

For its implementation, Germany invested approximately 20 Mio Euros since 2006.

Madam Chairperson,

In answer to the recommendations by the seventh session of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, I would like to highlight three issues in particular: climate change, the preservation of indigenous languages and finally indigenous women's rights:


(1) Let me start with the issue of climate change: the conservation and sustainable use of land and natural resources is one of the thematic priorities of Germany's strategy for cooperation with indigenous peoples in Latin America. We acknowledge that traditional territories and their resources are vital for all indigenous peoples and we also know that climate change already threatens their survival in many places.

For this reason, Germany strongly supported the participation of indigenous organisations from Latin America in the international negotiations in 2008 on biodiversity, protected areas and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. This year, too, Germany is helping indigenous organisations from Latin America to prepare for and take part in the forthcoming negotiations on the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Germany's programmes for demarcating Indian territories in the Brazilian Amazon region and the promotion of small pilot projects in the Indian territories in Brazil are successful examples of conserving traditional environments. These programmes form part of a large multilateral pilot programme to preserve the Brazilian rainforest which is coordinated by the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment and the World Bank. The aim of demarcation is to support the National Indian Foundation, in securing and protecting Indian territories with the involvement of the population concerned. In the last years, 115 territories have been legally demarcated with German aid, with a total area larger than the Federal Republic of Germany!

(2) On the revival of indigenous languages, let me mention the German support to the Development Fund for Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean in establishing the network of the Indigenous Intercultural Universities. The purpose of this initiative is to train highly qualified personnel for indigenous organisations and Latin American governments on indigenous and intercultural issues. Since 2005, 18 universities and indigenous organisations from 10 countries have joined the network and 204 students have so far completed the post-graduate courses on indigenous law, intercultural medicine and bilingual intercultural education.

(3) My final point is on indigenous women's rights. In its national Gender Action Plan, Germany stipulates gender equality and women's empowerment as an inherent and explicit goal and a



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general principle of project and programme design in German development policy. This also applies to the cooperation with indigenous peoples in Latin America. We are working on a new programme aiming at preventing violence against women in Latin America. This programme will particularly support non-governmental and government institutions in improving the protection of rural women, against domestic or other criminal violence.

(4) In the last 4 years, German development cooperation has aligned its programmes more closely with the rights and needs of indigenous peoples, particularly in Latin America. Besides the relevant adjustments to programme design, German development cooperation personnel are also trained in intercultural topics included in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, Germany contributes to implementing the Declaration as per Article 42.

Madam Chairperson,

Let me conclude by reiterating Germany's support to indigenous peoples and to the successful implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you.