

UNITAR Statement

5th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

“Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining the Goals”

As the Secretary-General stated in his address to the third session of the Permanent Forum, if the 21st Century is to be the “Age of Prevention” indigenous peoples must be actively involved in decisions that affect them. As marginalization and exclusion from political and economic processes lead to alienation and poverty, and constitute some of the root causes of conflict, enhancing capacity and opportunities for the meaningful participation of indigenous women and men in decision-making and political processes comprise some concrete mechanisms for the prevention of violent conflict. Inclusive, consultative approaches also enhance understanding of the needs, perspectives, experiences and diverse cultures of indigenous peoples which can assist in the formulation of appropriate policies and programmes that best address their respective needs in a sustainable manner.

The UNITAR training programme on conflict prevention and peacebuilding focuses on strengthening negotiation skills so that indigenous peoples’ may more effectively negotiate in development and other processes that affect their peoples. Senior indigenous experts, who serve as resource persons for the UNITAR international and regional training programmes, present case studies on conflict and negotiation processes on development and resource issues, as these are key conflictual issues indigenous peoples and States face. UN Special Rapporteurs and a World Bank staff member are also invited to address the group on a range of development issues, policies and programmes relating to land and resources. Colleagues from the ILO and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights conduct sessions on improving conditions for life and work and on utilizing rights-based approaches to

development. The Millennium Development Goals and reports, as well as UN reports on dialogue processes over natural resources are provided to each participant as reference materials in their handbook for the training.

The programme also examines mechanisms and processes that promote participation of diverse groups in order to counter marginalization and exclusion. Participants then engage in negotiation simulations focusing on resource issues and inclusive political participation processes in order to build on their capacity to satisfactorily negotiate on behalf of their organizations and communities, and to develop mutually beneficial, sustainable options.

Millennium Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples: Collaboration with the African Union and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights:

At each of the two recent regional training programmes organized in Africa, in Tanzania for Anglophone representatives, and in Morocco for Francophone representatives, UNITAR invited Commissioners from the African Union's African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Chair and Expert Members of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities to engage in dialogue with indigenous representatives from Africa on the mandate and activities of the Commission and the Working Group, as well as to discuss how to best interact with these regional mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa. The landmark report of the Working Group and country mission reports have been provided to all African participants and shared with resource persons from around the world. We would like to extend our thanks to Ambassador Rezag-Bara, Chair of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and Communities, expert Member Zephyrin Kalimba, and Permanent Forum Members, Hassan Id Balkassm

and Lilian Muzangi for their valuable contributions to the regional training for indigenous representatives of Africa held in Morocco in March, with the helpful logistical organization of the Tamaynut Association. We would like to thank Permanent Forum Chairperson, Vicki Tauli-Corpuz, for her important contribution to last year's international training programme. The next international programme is planned for this August in Geneva. Planning and fundraising are ongoing for the next regional training planned for the end of the year.

We would like to extend our appreciation to the governments of Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland for their support towards the most recent international and regional training programmes. As UNITAR receives no funds from the regular UN budget, it is contributions like these make that these requested training programmes possible. Thank you.