

**Statement by Mr. Yao Shaojun, Counselor of the Chinese Delegation
at the Discussion on the Asian Region of the 13th Session of the
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

15 May, 2014, New York

Madam Chair,

China welcomes this discussion on the Asian region by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII).

Indigenous peoples are a special group in our society. For hundreds of years, they have lived and thrived on their traditional lands and have created valuable and unique wealth for the development of pluralistic human society. However, many indigenous groups not only experienced tragic history full of blood and tears when they were slaughtered or expelled, but even in today's world with highly developed material civilization, many of them still subsist at the bottom and margins of the society. Hence, the international community is duty bound to fully meet the legitimate requests of indigenous peoples, to promote and protect their basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, to safeguard the natural environment and resources on which their survival depends, and to cherish and conserve their traditional cultures.

Although China does not have indigenous issues per se, it firmly supports the promotion and protection of the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of all indigenous peoples around the world. Over the years, it has always actively supported and participated in UN activities concerning indigenous peoples, including those of the PFII. We would like to make the following observations:

First, promoting the development of indigenous peoples around the world is a continuous mission without an end date. China appreciates the efforts made by the international community in establishing the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and adopting the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, efforts to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples

and strengthen their comprehensive development still face serious challenges, including the failure of some developed countries to earnestly implement the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples to be held this September will provide an opportunity to further mobilize the necessary political will to advance the development of indigenous peoples around the world. China supports the convening of the World Conference, and hopes that in-depth discussions will be carried out at the conference on how to better promote the development of indigenous peoples. We support deep involvement by indigenous organizations in the preparatory process of the Conference, and agree that their views on the outcome document of the Conference be duly heard through appropriate channels.

Second, the concerns of indigenous peoples should be taken into adequate consideration in the post-2015 Development Agenda. 2015 marks the deadline for the implementation of the MDGs and the beginning of the post-2015 Development Agenda. China believes that the rights, views and requests of indigenous peoples should be given full consideration in the formulation of the post-2015 Development Agenda, so that, through this process and the following implementation of the Agenda, the historical injustice suffered by indigenous peoples can be truly redressed, their rights promoted and protected, and their comprehensive development achieved. We call upon the countries concerned to seize this opportunity to turn their political will into action by effectively implementing their laws and policies on protecting the rights and interests of indigenous peoples, so as to promote the comprehensive implementation of the Declaration.

Third, The promotion and protection of the rights and interests of indigenous peoples should correspond to local situations and be carried out step by step. Indigenous peoples in different countries and regions face different difficulties and challenges. For some, the main issue may be the lack of economic development, whereas for others, it may be the lack of political participation. Hence targeted measures should be taken in light of different situations on the ground. Efforts should be prioritized based on the urgency and gravity of the issues to achieve tangible results gradually but steadily. More attention should be paid to the development issues facing indigenous women, children, the elderly and those with disabilities. The international community should enhance cooperation, focus on poverty eradication for and economic empowerment of relevant

indigenous groups and take measures to eradicate social discrimination in order to promote social cohesion and common development.

Thank you, Madam Chair.