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TPs on Follow-Up to World Conference

The World Conference was a high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly held on 22 and 23 September 2014 at UN Headquarters in New York. This was the first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, a historic occasion for the UN signifying the increasing attention to the situation of indigenous peoples worldwide. It was organized with the active participation of indigenous peoples, Member States, UN agencies, programmes and funds as well as other partners. Approximately 1600 people - representatives of indigenous peoples from across the world, UN Member States, non-governmental organizations, and UN agencies, programmes and funds – participated at the conference.

The World Conference was notable for the high level of participation of indigenous peoples, not only at the Conference itself but also throughout the preparatory process. Indigenous Peoples organized themselves through regional preparatory meetings as well as at the Alta global preparatory meeting, where the indigenous peoples of the world assembled and reached consensus on a unified position that is reflected in the Alta Document.

The World Conference was also significant in how indigenous peoples participated in the elaboration of the outcome document, where Les Malezer and Myrna Cunningham played a crucial role as advisors to the President of the General Assembly. Earlier John Henriksen had played a crucial role as co-facilitator during the consultations on the modalities resolution for the World Conference. Indigenous peoples also played a major role in the negotiations on the outcome document ensuring that our priorities were included. I also recognize the spirit of cooperation that many member states showed during the whole process.

The key elements of the outcome document are the following:

- Reaffirmation of prior commitments and recognition of indigenous peoples' rights included in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- New recognitions and commitments on a range of issues including:
 - Disaggregation of statistical data on indigenous peoples
 - Recognition of indigenous peoples' justice systems
 - Capacity building of indigenous youth
 - Situations of indigenous persons with disabilities
 - Empowerment of indigenous women and addressing violence against them
 - Support for indigenous peoples' occupations, traditional subsistence activities, economies, livelihoods and food security
 - Developing mechanisms for access to and repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains
 - Reducing rates of HIV and AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and non-communicable diseases, and ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health and rights
 - Recognition of the responsibility of transnational corporations and other business enterprises to respect the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- Commitments by member states to take specific actions at the national level to achieve the ends of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These

include legislative, policy and administrative measures and national action plans or strategies.

In addition, the UN is also asked specifically to do the following:

- Develop a system-wide action plan “to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”;
- Review the mandates of existing UN mechanisms, in particular the mandate of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, with a view to modifying and improving them to more effectively promote respect for the Declaration; and
- Consider ways to enable the participation of indigenous peoples’ representatives and institutions in UN meetings relevant to them.

In order to assist with these tasks, the outcome document asks the Secretary-General to:

- Designate a Senior Official of the United Nations system that would be responsible for coordinating follow up action for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.
- To report to the General Assembly on implementation of the outcome document, including proposals on (a) using, modifying and improving existing UN mechanisms to achieve the ends of the Declaration; (b) enhancing a coherent system-wide approach to achieving the ends of the Declaration; and (c) enabling the participation of indigenous peoples representatives and institutions at the United Nations.

In March 2015, the Secretariat circulated a questionnaire to Member States and indigenous peoples requesting that they provide inputs on how these three issues:

- How the mandates of existing mechanisms, in particular the Expert Mechanism, may be modified and improved to more effectively promote respect for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- The development of system-wide action plan “to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”;
- And ways to enable the participation of indigenous peoples’ representatives and institutions in UN meetings relevant to them.

Indigenous peoples have already met to discuss the possibilities of how to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples at the UN. This is a difficult process and there are many member states that have questions about increased participation of indigenous peoples at the UN. However it is crucial that we find some way to recognize that indigenous peoples are not just NGOs. We have our own institutions, governments and representatives and they are recognized in many countries. However they are not recognized at the UN. We

must find a way to work with Member States and be creative and find a solution that respects indigenous peoples while also addressing the concerns of Member States.

We have 3 hours for this discussion and it may not be enough time. We expect that the first half of this session will focus on actions at the national level and we expecting Mr. Lenni Montiel Assistant-Secretary-General for Economic Development to join us at around 4:40 to provide an update from the United Nations on their activities to follow up on the World Conference.