

Thank you Madam Chair,

As we now celebrate the 10th anniversary of the UN Declaration and are gathered at the 10th session of the Expert Mechanism with the enhanced mandate, the most ambitious and generous interpretation must be given to ride the metaphorical bike without training wheels and move from deliberation to interpretation and implementation.

We have traveled from all 7 regions, conquered oceans, skies and intimidations to address this Mechanism, as protagonists of this Forum time is gold to us. A number of Indigenous delegations were unable to intervene on various agenda items. We welcome the presented working methods and recommend the Expert Mechanism to continue its reflection towards accommodation of our expert advice to move towards interpretation and implementation of the UN Declaration.

Madam Chair,

10 years of experience, brings institutional knowledge that can provide a comprehensive interpretation of the provisions entrenched in the UN Declaration, we recommend the Expert Mechanism to publish general guidance on cross-cutting issues such as the use of counter-terrorism legislation to criminalize Indigenous Rights Defenders or a number of subjects such as, territorial integrity as reflected in Article 46, or culturally appropriate protocols on the right to Free Prior and Informed Consent.

In this regard we reiterate the call made at the sixteenth session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues that the next four Expert Group Meetings provide guidelines on the implementation or application of the UN Declaration, commencing in 2018 with a priority focus on the Free Prior and Informed Consent.

Thank you Madam Chair,