

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues – second session
Education
Statement by the Delegation of Brazil



Mr. Chairman,

Brazil benefits from a great confluence of cultures, races and traditions and attaches utmost importance to diversity, tolerance and respect.

My delegation has repeatedly reaffirmed our commitment to the promotion and protection of the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples. Over 200 ethnic groups and at least 170 different languages compose the rich ethnic variety of indigenous cultures in Brazil.

Our Constitution recognizes indigenous peoples' social organization, customs, languages, creeds and traditions, as well as their original rights over the lands they traditionally occupy. It also supports and fosters the appreciation and diffusion of indigenous cultures.

In the field of education, a number of indigenous communities benefit from specific schooling in their native languages, respectful of the social and cultural values of each particular group.

We are committed to providing to our indigenous peoples quality education, which is differentiated, bilingual and intercultural, and which contributes to the strengthening of the autonomy of the communities. The challenge ahead of us is to improve the qualification

of teachers. The production and publication of teaching materials also needs to be properly addressed. Moreover, it is necessary to disseminate information on indigenous issues to the educational system as a whole.

Mr. Chairman,

The ratification without reservations by Brazil of ILO Convention n. 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries represents an important conceptual advancement and paves the way for strengthening the technical cooperation between Brazil and ILO in this field.

We fully subscribe to the Durban Declaration and Program of Action, which recognizes the need to protect indigenous peoples from all forms of discrimination.

Nevertheless, the international community still lags behind when it comes to the adoption of international instruments that protect indigenous peoples' rights.

Sensitive issues have prevented us from making progress in the drafting of a much-awaited Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples. It is about time to ensure that the working group of the CHR adopts a fresh approach to the negotiations. The completion of the drafting work will depend on a great deal of flexibility on the part of all participants.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.