

Statement by Mr. Eiji Yamamoto
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Second session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Agenda Item 5: Methods of work of the Forum with the United Nations system

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have the pleasure and honor to present the views of the Government of Japan at this very important session under the agenda item "Methods of work of the Forum with the United Nations system."

Mr. Chairman,

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is the highest-level organ within the UN system ever to deal with indigenous issues. In addition, with its broad mandate to address economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, and human rights, it has unprecedented potential, as the Chairman stated in his opening remarks, to enhance the promotion and protection of indigenous peoples. It is imperative to consider how the Forum can carry out its mandate effectively, so as to truly realize its potential, making the best use of available resources. In this connection, as many speakers have pointed out, it is of utmost importance to coordinate and integrate activities concerning indigenous issues within the UN system. In particular, we should explore how best cooperation and coordination between the Forum and the UN agencies can be achieved.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the establishment of the secretariat of the Permanent Forum last February within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). We thank the secretariat for all the hard work it has done so far, including its

preparations for this session, which we think was remarkable. Also, our appreciation goes to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for temporarily providing its staff with the secretariat. We hope that the secretariat will continue to support and assist the Forum in carrying out its mandate. In particular, we expect that it will play a crucial role in coordinating activities and mainstreaming indigenous issues within the UN system. In this regard, we encourage relevant departments of the UN and the UN agencies to further enhance cooperation with the secretariat and implement recommendations of the Forum as appropriate.

We also would like to thank DESA for its positive involvement in indigenous issues, including establishing the Intra-departmental Task Force within DESA. Since the expertise of DESA covers many mandated areas of the Forum, regular meetings of the Task Force are desirable so that the Forum can take the best advantage of the expertise DESA has.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to express our appreciation for the work of the Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG), which has held two meetings since the first session of the Forum. We also would like to express our appreciation to the agencies participating in the IASG for their interest in and commitment to indigenous issues. We find its activities very important because the Group provides the opportunity for the UN and its agencies to share information and experience, and enhance coordination and cooperation within the UN system. We hope that the IASG will continue to work closely and actively with the Forum.

Mr. Chairman,

While the secretariat of the Forum was established within DESA, OHCHR has much expertise on indigenous issues, particularly in the field of human rights, that enables it to extend valuable assistance to the two relevant working groups and the special rapporteur, and to the operation of two funds, regarding indigenous issues. Therefore we need to consider how the Forum can take best advantage of

this expertise. OHCHR is a member of the IASG, which provides an important framework for OHCHR's expertise to be reflected in the work of the Forum. We cannot stress too much the importance of cooperation between DESA and OHCHR to assist and support the Forum in carrying out its mandate. As a result of the review on the indigenous mechanism within the UN system that will be conducted by ECOSOC this summer, it might be possible to shift to the secretariat of the Forum any human resources of OHCHR that might become available from OHCHR through streamlining the mechanism, which would be the best way for OHCHR to share its expertise with DESA.

Thank you very much.