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Agenda item 4
Implementation of the United Nations Declaration
on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Madame Chair, Distinguished Members of the Permanent Forum,

The ILO congratulates you and all the members of the Permanent Forum for your appointment and wishes you success.

In its work towards the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, the ILO considers discriminations faced by indigenous or tribal peoples as a central aspect of its mandate to address exclusion and marginalization

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples represents a global consensus and a universally accepted standard on the rights of indigenous peoples. It carries a heavy moral weight, which derives from the wide support by more than 130 countries, the strong participation of indigenous peoples in its negotiation process, and the increasing number of new endorsements by Member States.

The Declaration and ILO Convention No.169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples are intertwined international instruments, whose implementation has to be mutually sustaining.

Among the many ILO's experiences that could contribute to the Declaration implementation, I would bring to the Forum attention the 2010 General Observation on ILO Convention No.169 made by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, which provides useful guidance on the right to consultation of indigenous peoples, including the right to effectively participate in national decision-making processes; the principle of given consent; the importance of establishing appropriate procedural mechanism to do so, and the importance of granting indigenous peoples as much control as possible when implementing measures related to their own economic, social and cultural development.

The Declaration's provisions are now included in almost all trainings kits and materials developed by ILO projects on indigenous peoples in more than 22 countries across Latin America, Asia and Africa, and the ILO is making all possible efforts to make the Declaration accessible to the beneficiaries of its projects. For example, the ILO project in Nepal has translated the text of the Declaration into Nepalese and has

included it in the project's advocacy material. Moreover, the ILO is currently working on an updated version of "Monitoring Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Rights through ILO Conventions" and on a compilation of relevant cases and jurisprudences on indigenous peoples by numerous institutions, including regional human rights bodies.

Madame Chair

The ILO believes that the implementation of the Declaration needs to be tracked and monitored with the view to assess its actual impact on the daily living conditions of indigenous peoples. To this end, the ILO has committed itself to investing in the Inter-Agency work on indicators, and hosted the first Experts Meeting on this issue in September 2010, in collaboration with the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights and the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum. The experts acknowledged the importance of the creation of a common assessment framework to enhance coordination, complementarity and synergies. The framework should reflect the full range of rights enshrined in the Declaration and ILO Convention No. 169, in addition to the "deficit-oriented" approach applied in many countries to document the social, political and economic gaps between the indigenous and non-indigenous sectors of society. The framework should also help to identify bridges to the broader human rights framework as well as links to existing institutionalized supervisory mechanisms. The ILO would like to reaffirm its commitment to this process, which should also be broadened to other stakeholders, including Governments and indigenous peoples.

Madame Chair

I would like to share with you today that much progress have been made regarding the United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Partnership (UNIPP), a collaborative framework established by UNDP, UNICEF, OHCHR and ILO to support effective implementation of the Declaration and ILO Convention N.169 at the country level. As UNIPP's Interim Secretariat, the ILO uses this opportunity to invite all of you to attend the official UNIPP launch, which will take place at the UNICEF House on 20 May 2011 from 1:15 to 2.45 pm.

Finally Madame Chair, the ILO hopes that the current momentum towards the strengthened promotion and protection of the human rights of indigenous peoples will further encourage States to consider ratifying and implementing Convention 169. In this regard, I would like to share with the Forum the information of the first ratification of ILO Convention No.169 by the Central African Republic in August 2010. We hope that more African countries will do the same, as they take steps to implement the Declaration.

Thank you.