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Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues (IASG)

Intervention at the interactive hearing on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples' Issues

18 June 2014

I have the pleasure to take the floor on behalf of the UN Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues (IASG), which OHCHR has the honour to chair this year together with the co-chair, the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

As many of you know, the IASG brings together over 30 entities operating within the UN system to enhance cooperation on, and attention to, indigenous peoples' issues and to support the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. While the specific mandates of IASG members vary greatly, we are united by our shared commitment to promoting respect for and full application of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in line with its Article 42.

The IASG attaches great importance to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and to the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the process.

The IASG's support to the WCIP is inspired by Article 42 and Article 41 of the Declaration, which directs the organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to contribute to the full realization of the provisions of the Declaration through the mobilization, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance. With this in mind, the annual meeting of the IASG, hosted by the previous chair, UNICEF, examined how the IASG could provide support to the World Conference. One of the conclusions of that meeting was that the IASG should develop a set of collaborative thematic papers that could inform the World Conference process on concrete proposals for accelerating the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and by implication the World Conference outcome document.

The first eight thematic papers have been completed this week, and they are now available on the web site of the President of General Assembly devoted to the World Conference. We trust that they are a useful resource to States, indigenous peoples and others involved in the World Conference process and in the preparation of the outcome document.

A number of interventions made at this interactive hearing have called for enhanced action within the UN system to support the realization of indigenous peoples' rights, and proposals to this effect have been made also in the Alta Outcome document. We have also heard at this hearing about examples of enhanced indigenous peoples' participation in the work of agencies, and the IASG is supportive of expanding such practices within the UN system.

The IASG believes that the QCPR, the UN Secretary General's Rights Up Front Action Plan and the Delivering as one Framework all provide opportunities and entry points for UN action on indigenous issues at country, regional and global levels.

The IASG has also supported efforts to ensure that indigenous peoples' issues are addressed by the UN at the country level. In this respect, one important tool that merits attention also in the World Conference context is the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples, prepared by a task team of IASG in 2008. Stressing that the programmatic interventions of United Nations Country Teams should recognize the specificity of indigenous peoples' situations and cultures in implementing the rights-based approach, the Guidelines contain lines of action for planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes involving indigenous peoples, including in many of the areas that have been highlighted as priorities by indigenous peoples in the World Conference process.

The IASG sees the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples as a unique opportunity for having an open and constructive dialogue that will help to address reduction of poverty, malnutrition and marginalization that indigenous peoples - children, women and men - face daily.

In the wake of the Post 2015 discussions, the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples is an important forum where the issues affecting the lives of millions of indigenous peoples should be discussed and solutions found.

The IASG remains committed to supporting the World Conference process in all possible ways. Also, at its annual meeting later this year, the

IASG will examine how it can support follow-up to the action oriented Outcome Document of the World Conference.