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**Fourth Session of the Permanent Forum
on Indigenous Issues**

New York, 17 May 2005

Madame Chairperson,

Thank you for permitting me to take the floor in this important meeting, to share with participants information about the work of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), relevant to agenda item 3 (a): Goal 1 of the MDGs “Eradicate Extreme poverty and Hunger”. At the same time, I would like to report on the two major activities that are carried out by FAO which are linked with and involve the indigenous peoples’ priorities in the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

Since its establishment in 1945, FAO has worked to alleviate poverty and hunger by promoting agricultural development, improved nutrition and pursuit of food security. The World Food Summit held in Rome in November 1996 called for concerted efforts at all levels, to raise food production and increase access to food in 86 low-income food deficit countries in order to halve the number of undernourished people by the year 2015. The World Food Summit goal is related in various degrees to the Millennium Development Goals.

First, **the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** was adopted in November 2001 and entered into force in June 2004. (The text of the Treaty is contained in appendix D of the report of the FAO Conference on its thirty-first session, Rome, 2-13 November 2001 [C2001/REP], available from www.fao.org.) The objective of the Treaty, in harmony with that of the Convention on Biological Diversity, is to achieve the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use, for food security and sustainable agriculture. The Treaty recognizes the enormous contribution that farmers and local and indigenous communities have made, and continue to make, to the conservation and development of plant genetic resources. This is the basis for farmers’ rights, which include the protection of traditional knowledge, and the right to participate equitably in benefit-sharing and in national decision-making on plant genetic resources. The first meeting of the Treaty’s Governing Body will be held in 2006.

Second, **the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security** was adopted at the 127th session of the FAO Council in November 2004 (available from http://www.fao.org/rightoffood/common/ecg/51596_en_VGS_eng_web.pdf). The Council recommended the guidelines’ implementation by member countries, and their wide dissemination to all relevant UN bodies and organizations. These Guidelines are a fundamental step towards pursuing the right to food for the hungry and poor, including those in vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples. Their implementation should constitute an important contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal 1.

Thank you for your kind attention Madame Chairperson.