

MÉXICO



UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

11th Session

Statement by Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba,
Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations

ITEM 9

Fifth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations
Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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Mr. President,

It is with great pleasure that Mexico participates in this meeting to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The reasons for celebrating are many, in a short period we have achieved growing and universal support for the Declaration by States and a better understanding of its importance. The complex world in which we live in requires the recognition of the richness of different forms of coexistence, cultural expression and visions of the world of indigenous peoples, which enrich us all.

It is thanks to the Declaration that the rights of indigenous peoples can be promoted and protected from two distinct dimensions, individual and collective. We have learned to understand this dichotomy as a strength instead of a reason for division.

In this sense the Declaration constitutes the roadmap of a new relationship based on respect, multiculturalism, good faith, and cooperation among States, indigenous peoples and our society; a new indispensable relationship in order to promote the rights of indigenous peoples.

In the system of the United Nations, the Declaration plays a key transversal role in guiding actions and recommendations of the human rights bodies and mechanisms, including those with specific mandates related to indigenous peoples.

In recent years we have observed the relevance of the Declaration in diverse areas such as cultural expression, linguistic diversity, traditional knowledge, the protection of land and territories, the fight against climate change and the participation of indigenous women in all aspects of economic, social and political life.

In Mexico the Declaration has been exceptionally useful in guiding, with greater clarity, governmental policies in aspects related to the development of indigenous peoples, including consultation mechanisms that will continue to be improved upon by experiences gained and continuous practice.

The understanding of the objectives and rights of the Declaration by indigenous peoples themselves is fundamental for it to be effective. This is why in Mexico, the Declaration has been translated into a large number of indigenous languages and has been released through the appropriate intercultural mechanisms.

Mr. President,

It is not my intention to dwell on the difficulties and hurdles that indigenous peoples, together with States, overcame in order to adopt the Declaration in 2007.

Instead, I would like to focus on the political will, the flexibility and the openness of the stakeholders that allowed for the adoption to be possible. This common vision was constructed throughout an extended period of time, and reached its culmination in the workshop celebrated in Michoacán, Mexico, from which emerged the call "Spirit of Pátzcuaro", that many here today may recall.

This spirit, which in great measure helped conclude that important stage, has been once again reflected in the concrete steps that States and indigenous peoples have taken during the preparation for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples 2014.

During informal consultations, which I have had the pleasure of conducting along with John Henriksen, the Indigenous Representative, and during the discussions that have taken place during this very week in the framework of the Permanent Forum, a constant notion has been present: the recognition that during the preparation process and in the World Conference itself, the effective participation of indigenous peoples should be assured and the results of the Conference should once again be based on understanding and cooperation between indigenous peoples and States.

Thanks to the implementation of the principles and objectives of the Declaration, in the upcoming year we should see concrete results in the improvement of the standard of living for indigenous peoples. The World Conference allows us the opportunity to move forward in this objective.

This is why this meeting, more than a celebration of the accomplishments reached, is a call to intensify our effort in favor of the rights of indigenous peoples around the world.

Thank you.