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Hendrik Garcia

Permanent Mission of the Philippines

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Philippines

General Statement
Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
1 October 2008

Mr. Chairperson,

The Philippine delegation wishes to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson and also congratulates all members of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on the convening of this first session of the expert mechanism.

Mr. Chairperson

The Philippines attaches significant importance to the rights of indigenous peoples. The Philippine Constitution declares it a national policy to recognize and promote the rights of indigenous cultural communities within the framework of national unity and development. The Philippines has a national Indigenous Peoples Rights Act that accords protection to the rights of indigenous peoples. The Philippines also has a government agency, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, which works for the empowerment of indigenous peoples.

Our delegation played an active role in negotiations on the mandate of the expert mechanism and we view the mechanism as a ~~potentially~~ ^{the establishment} useful tool of the Human Rights Council to more effectively implement its mandate as it relates to the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

As a subsidiary mechanism of the Council, we would like to see the expert mechanism hue closely to the directions set out for it by the Council. Human Rights Council resolution 6/36 and the recently adopted resolution, on human rights and indigenous peoples at the 9th session of the Council should guide the work of the expert mechanism. ^{CL.17}

To avoid duplication of efforts, we encourage the expert mechanism to work in close coordination and cooperation with the two other mechanisms devoted to indigenous peoples issues in the UN system, namely the Special Rapporteur and the Permanent Forum.

We believe that the expert mechanism can also be a unique platform for dialogue & cooperation among stakeholders, especially with civil society and representatives of indigenous peoples → with a view to producing practical and useful thematic studies and research-based advice for the Human Rights Council.

All work of the expert mechanism should be done with the highest professional and objective standards. Views and inputs of states should also be taken into account.

without unduly hampering the ability of the reports mechanism to make its own proposals for approval of the Human Rights Council. our delegation believes that

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in a transparent manner