Seventh session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
7 to 11 July 2014
Geneva - United Nations Palais des Nations


Statement delivered by Jesse McCormick on behalf of the Deshkaan Ziibing Anishinaabeg, also known as Chippewas of the Thames First Nation.

Thank Mr. /Madam Chairperson,

My name is Jesse McCormick. I am a citizen of the Deshkaan Ziibing Anishinaabeg, also known as the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation. We are pleased to present this statement on the zero-draft conference outcome document for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples released this morning.

We applaud the efforts of the Global Coordinating Group and Indigenous Peoples around the globe for the work that has been completed to date in relation to the development of this document. We also recognize and acknowledge the support and participation of States in these discussions. We would like to offer the following recommendation for the consideration of the Expert Mechanism.

Chippewas of the Thames First Nation is located in south-western Ontario, Canada. In the early 1800s our Chiefs entered into an oral treaty with representatives of the British Crown in 1818. The terms of the oral treaty were set out (and later modified without consent) by representatives of the British Crown in written “provisional” treaties in 1819 (Treaty No. 21), in 1820 (Treaty No. 250%), and a final treaty in 1822 (Treaty No. 25). Our right to self-determination is evidenced both in and by our treaties and they are fundamental in our relations with the Crown. We are concerned that the zero-draft conference outcome document does not address treaties, agreements or constructive arrangements.

The Global Indigenous Preparatory Conference for the high-level plenary meeting of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly to be called the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (HLPM/WCIP) was held 10-12 June 2013 in Alta, Norway. The outcome of that gathering was the Alta Outcome Document.

In September, the Alta Outcome Document was submitted as an attachment to a letter to the UN Secretary-General requesting that the document be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly. The letter was signed by nine member States including Bolivia, Denmark, Finland, Guatemala, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway and Peru. As a result, it is now considered an official document of the UN (A/67/994).
As recognized in Article 37 of the Declaration, Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors and to have States honour and respect such treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.

The importance of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements was also reflected in the Alta Outcome Document. However, treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements are not addressed in the zero-draft conference outcome document.

Chippewas of the Thames First Nation requests that the Expert Mechanism recommend the express inclusion of the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements in the conference outcome document.