



*Check against delivery*

**UNDP Opening Statement**

**14<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

**20 April – 1 May 2015**

**Item 3**

**“Outcome of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the  
World Conference on Indigenous Peoples”**

**20 April 2015  
(3:00 - 6:00 p.m.)  
Conference Room 4**

Patrick Keuleers  
Chief of Profession Governance and Peacebuilding  
Bureau for Policy and Programme Support  
UNDP New York

Madam Chairperson, to whom we extend our congratulations on your appointment,

Honourable Permanent Forum members,

Indigenous representatives,

Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for UNDP to address the Permanent Forum on the important follow-up to the outcome of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. The formulation of the **UN System-Wide Action Plan** is vitally critical as it will serve as the basis for our coherent action and joint endeavours as a UN system towards achieving the goals of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Within the Interagency Support Group UNDP has been actively engaged in the process of drafting the SWAP thus far bringing our experience and perspective from our work in 177 countries and territories and broad engagement with indigenous peoples.

UNDP also hosts the **Resident Coordinator system** and we are committed to play a key role in the implementation of the finalized SWAP at the country level to support both Member States and Indigenous Peoples in achieving the ends of UNDRIP.

Above all, we will endeavour to ensure that the SWAP will make our efforts on the ground stronger and more impactful for indigenous peoples. Working jointly with the rest

of the UN system on key priorities will keep the momentum from the World Conference alive and a coherent approach will reinforce our individual UNDP programmes and policies thereby furthering indigenous peoples' rights.

Work and engagement with indigenous peoples has been a priority focus area within UNDP's overall mission to **mainstream a human rights-based approach** into our development policies and programmes, and in our global **efforts to fight discrimination** and support marginalized peoples and groups.

To this end, we have for example jointly with other UN agencies integrated indigenous people's' rights in more than 27 UN Development Assistance Frameworks (**UNDAFs**, as was the case for example in Nepal, Philippines, Nicaragua, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Bolivia, and Colombia); we have also engaged with **national human rights institutions** in Indonesia and Malaysia to undertake public enquiries on indigenous land and forest rights; and we are implementing **programmes towards enhanced participation, access to justice and rights** for indigenous peoples in Guatemala, Panama and Costa Rica.

We are also very pleased to confirm the operationalization of the **Social and Environmental Standards** for UNDP effective from 01 January 2015. These standards aim to ensure that we strengthen the social and environmental outcomes of UNDP's programmes and projects and avoid adverse impacts to people and the environment utilizing the overall principles of human rights and with a particular Standard on

Indigenous Peoples amongst others including cultural heritage, displacement and resettlement and biodiversity.

In 2015, the Equator Prize will be placing special emphasis on recognising indigenous leadership, innovations and activism, especially with regards to the sustainable management of forests. I take this opportunity to invite you to visit the Equator Initiative website where the call for nominations is now open.

I wish you constructive discussions and fruitful engagement throughout this fourteenth session of the Permanent Forum and look forward to being informed of the recommendations.

Thank you for your attention.