

# Statement of the Republic of Mauritius

## Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Mr. President,

Narsingh  
Hombhagen -  
Delegat of Mauritius

During these two weeks, we have been happy to observe the zeal and consensual approach which prevailed during the debates and deliberations in the Human Rights Council. We hope that such conducive atmosphere will continue. *Mauritius, as a small country feels honoured to bring its contribution on this historical event.*

The present draft declaration shows the commitment of the Council to consolidate and enshrine principles of human rights. Mauritius, which is a cradle of democracy and human rights, understands the past sufferings of indigenous peoples and their actual difficulties.

We are supporting this declaration, with a view that all members will contribute in a constructive manner to alleviate and resolve the difficulties faced by indigenous peoples.

My delegation, Mr. President, notes with satisfaction that there is almost a *broad acceptance* consensus on the text of the declaration. It could have been better, if we had *consensus* unanimity on this first auspicious occasion.

However, we do understand the hesitation and apprehension of some members to support the text. Though, Mauritius does not have any problem with any indigenous group, we also have some apprehensions.

For instance, Mr. President, some groups, without being really indigenous, may make an abuse of Article 3 of the declaration. Worst, some may even deliberately assimilate right to self-determination to right to secession, especially in the context of multi-racial, multi-ethnic countries. <sup>However, we hope that it will</sup> No grouping should be allowed to put in jeopardy National Sovereignty.

There is also the potential danger of unqualified grouping, which may create problems in a given state, by trying to self-designate themselves as "indigenous" in the absence of a definition.

However, because of our strong adherence to all acceptable and reasonable standards of human rights, we have voted in favour of this draft declaration, in spite of these technical shortcomings, so as not to spoil such a trust with the destiny of human rights and its evolution. We leave it in the hands of bona-fide, right-minded, and objective people to interpret these concepts in the appropriate manner.