



GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA

STATEMENT

BY

**THE HONOURABLE MRS. VALERIE GARRIDO-LOWE, M.P.,
MINISTER WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' AFFAIRS**

AT THE

**SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES (UNPFII)**

**Agenda Item 4: Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with
reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

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Madam Chair

I thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the discussions under the current agenda item and I am pleased to briefly speak of some of the initiatives that are being advanced by the Government of Guyana in keeping with its obligations to the Indigenous Peoples under the six mandated areas.

Madam Chair

The Government of Guyana recently started a novel agricultural project in one of our hinterland communities that will see each farmer participating in the project earning an additional income of at least fourteen thousand four hundred US Dollars (US\$14,400) per annum. I am speaking of the Sun-Dried Tomato project which resulted from a partnership between the Governments of Guyana and Canada. The project is an excellent illustration of how modern science could be wed to the traditional agricultural knowledge of our Indigenous Peoples to promote the economic development of this segment of our population.

The Sun-Dried Tomato project has created additional employment for the communities in question and given the viability of this undertaking, the Government hopes to replicate it in other Indigenous Communities, upon consultation. This is, of course, only one of the several economic ventures being undertaken by the Indigenous Peoples in my country.

Madam Chair,

You would recall that in my statement on Monday, I spoke of the measures we are taking to preserve, protect and promulgate the culture of our Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, in the interest of time, I would not repeat those.

Allow me, however, to speak briefly of our efforts in the area of education. The Government of Guyana has made provisions for every hinterland community to have free access to education from the nursery to secondary level. We perceived, however, that some communities were experiencing logistical challenges in getting

to these schools and in response to this, boats, bicycles and buses were provided to the communities where the need existed.

In the area of health, the Government has been paying particular attention to improving maternal health services, combatting malaria, improving emergency response services, and training more members of our Indigenous Peoples as Community Health Workers. As well, a Special Needs institution has been established in one of our communities catering both to academic and health needs and we intend to replicate this initiative in other communities.

With respect to the environment, it is worthwhile noting that the Indigenous Peoples have always enjoyed a harmonious relationship with the natural environment and on this account, the Government of Guyana finds a natural partner in the Indigenous Peoples as it pursues a green development strategy. We intend to implement a project in the near future for land reclamation in Indigenous areas that have been affected by mining activities. We are consulting with the Indigenous Peoples in this regard.

Madam Chair

These are just a few of the initiatives being pursued by my Government in the implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum and my delegation once again thanks you for the opportunity to share experiences.

I thank you.