

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**CLOSING REMARKS TO UN PERMANENT FORUM
ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES**

New York, May 20 2016

Mr. Alvaro Esteban Pop Ac, Chairperson of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues,
Distinguished Members of the Permanent Forum,
Representatives of indigenous peoples,
Excellencies,

Dear representatives of the UN system, representatives of other inter-governmental organizations
and of civil society,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to join all of you for the closing of the Fifteenth Session of the Permanent
Forum on Indigenous issues.

Through the years, I have had the pleasure of participating in many sessions of the
Permanent Forum.

I have also had the privilege of visiting several indigenous peoples' communities around
the world. In the process, I have gained a deeper understanding of your historical struggles, your
contributions to Mother Earth and humanity, your sustainable ways of living, your cultural
expressions as well as the endangered situation of your languages.

I have also heard your calls for recognition and respect for your identities and rights as
indigenous peoples.

My message to you is clear: I am with you.

We have made important strides together at the United Nations.

In September 2007, we adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of
Indigenous Peoples.

In 2014, we convened the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

Both of these milestones were the result of close partnerships between indigenous
peoples and Member States.

As a follow-up to the 2014 World Conference, we now have a system-wide action plan
on indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples are firmly on the United Nations' Agenda, thanks in large measure to your efforts.

Indigenous peoples were fully engaged in negotiations for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Now, it is crucial that indigenous peoples everywhere participate in and contribute to implementation and follow-up. States must be held accountable for implementing the 2030 Agenda, with full respect for the rights and minimum standards guaranteed for indigenous peoples in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

While much has been achieved, much remains to be done. For example, conflicts on the lands and territories of indigenous peoples, and the lack of inclusion of indigenous peoples' voices in peace processes, remain a challenge.

I call on all Member States, on indigenous peoples and the entire UN system to work together to address these and other serious concerns.

As you know, President of the General Assembly has launched consultations on enabling the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant UN bodies. I urge you to remain engaged and actively participate in this important consultation process.

Finally, since this is my final opportunity to address this Forum as Secretary-General, allow me to express my heartfelt thanks to all of you for your dedication, your inspiration, your openness and your generosity.

You can always count on me – and the United Nations.

We will continue to integrate the rights of indigenous peoples into international human rights and development agendas.

We will promote the integration of indigenous peoples' rights in policies and programmes at all levels.

With your help, we will ensure that the vision of the UN Declaration becomes a reality.

Thank you.