

# **General Assembly: Statement by Ambassador Berger on the commemoration of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

May 17, 2012

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Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Representatives of Indigenous Populations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to speak to you and to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Let me start by reiterating Germany's support to indigenous peoples and to the successful implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As indigenous peoples are particularly disadvantaged and often victims of human rights violations, one of the great challenges is to ensure respect for and compliance with those rights, and to include also the demands of indigenous women.

Indigenous peoples and individuals have – like anybody else – the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular those rights based on their indigenous origin or identity.

Germany strongly believes that indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts.

They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

Indigenous peoples have the right to just and fair procedures for the resolution of conflicts and disputes with States or other parties, as well as to effective remedies for all infringements of their individual and collective rights.

Over the last five years, German development cooperation aligned its programmes more closely with the rights and needs of indigenous peoples, Germany attaches great importance to intercultural topics including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is also the guiding principle of German development cooperation in this field, which aims at strengthening the right and equal access of indigenous people to basic services and resources to improve their living conditions and to reinforce the networks of indigenous organizations at national and cross-border level.

German development cooperation with indigenous peoples has so far focused on Latin America. However, I would like to point out that a global strategy for development cooperation with indigenous peoples is currently being elaborated and expected to be published by the end of this year.

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me conclude by reiterating Germany's support to indigenous peoples and to the successful implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you.