

**Seventeenth Session of  
The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
UNITAR Statement delivered by Trisha Riedy, Manager  
Programme in Peacemaking and Conflict Prevention**

Thank you. UNITAR is pleased to participate in this seventeenth session of the UN Permanent Forum and looks forward to continuing this fruitful collaboration.

*The UNITAR Training Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacemaking Capacities of Indigenous Peoples' Representatives* was developed in 2000 based on the requests of indigenous representatives for strengthened capacities in conflict resolution, and on the recommendation of UN Special Rapporteurs to enhance indigenous abilities to engage in negotiation and the realization of rights. The programme provides training for indigenous representatives in conflict analysis, negotiation, conflict transformation and reconciliation, coupled with information on UN and regional human rights mechanisms to further the promotion and protection of rights, and to contribute to the realization of the implementation of the UN Declaration.

As marginalization from political and economic processes, and conflict over land and resource issues are two of the most challenging areas indigenous peoples face, the majority of cases and negotiation simulations focus on these. The programme reviews both rights-based and problem-solving negotiation processes to strengthen indigenous capacities to analyze root causes of conflict, and engage in negotiation and dialogue with governments, the private sector and other communities to address priorities and resolve conflict in a mutually-beneficial, sustainable manner.

The training programme invites UN Special Rapporteurs, Permanent Forum Members and other senior indigenous experts to conduct sessions on successful negotiation on land and resource issues and on political participation. Professor Daes, Chief Willie Littlechild, Ms. Joan Carling, and Professor James Anaya are among the senior experts who have taught sessions on indigenous sovereignty over natural resources, on negotiation and implementation of land claims agreements, and on negotiations on ancestral lands. Initiatives to facilitate dialogue between indigenous representatives, governments and the private sector are also highlighted. Senior experts of the World Bank and ILO also regularly contribute to the programme.

UNITAR actively seeks the participation and contribution of indigenous women both as resource persons and participants. Women compose over 40% of participants. Some of the senior indigenous women who have taught in programmes at the regional or international level include UN Permanent Forum Members and Chairs, Ministers, and Parliamentarians. Female participants have included a Paramount Chief, an Attorney-General and a Traditional Chief from the Pacific, Presidents of Provincial and National Women's Councils in Africa, the Americas and the Pacific, advisors and other leaders and practitioners, advocates, managers, and community workers from around the world.

The previous UN Special Rapporteur, Professor James Anaya, who has contributed to 12 of the 16 UNITAR training programmes at both the international and regional levels, before his nomination, has also engaged in important dialogue sessions during several programmes. We also appreciated the important contribution of Dr. Megan Davis as former Permanent Forum Member and previous Chair to the 2015 international training programme. This was of special significance as she was a graduate of the first UNITAR training programme in 2000.

Four hundred and eighty-three indigenous peoples' representatives from around the world have deepened their knowledge and strengthened their skills through participation in the training programme. Six alumni of the UNITAR programme have served as Expert Members of the Permanent Forum including two former chairpersons, and two currently serving members. Four alumni have been named Members of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including three chairs (from Burundi, Malaysia, Russia). Twelve graduates have served as resource persons in the training programme. Alumni worked at the national, regional and international levels towards the adoption of the UN Declaration and continue to work at multiple levels to communicate needs, and concerns and to engage in dialogue with partners to forge mutually-beneficial solutions to challenges.

The 2016 report of the UN Permanent Forum urges Member States to contribute support for the UNITAR Training Programme to enhance indigenous capacities in human rights and conflict resolution. We are seeking financial support to be able to organize the requested 2018 training programme, and thank the governments of Canada and Sweden for their contributions towards these much-requested programmes.

The UN Secretary-General has identified conflict prevention, achieving political solutions through negotiation and mediation, and the promotion of human rights as his key priorities. This programme addresses these priorities, and contributes to strengthening capacities to achieve the 2030 Agenda goal of building peaceful, inclusive, just societies, and leaving no one behind.

UNITAR has contributed to the Inter-Agency Support Group and Permanent Forum from the beginning, as well as UN efforts to promote the increased effective involvement of indigenous peoples in decision-making, promotion and protection of rights, and development processes at multiple levels. We look forward to continuing to work with the Permanent Forum and other indigenous experts and partners to help contribute to the realization of peace, dignity and well-being for the indigenous peoples of the world. Thank you.

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