

STATEMENT

14th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues



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STATEMENT BY

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**Agenda Item 3: Follow-up on the recommendations of the Permanent Forum:
(a) Outcome of the high-level plenary meeting also known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples**

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,

The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples has brought a new dimension to our common efforts towards achieving the ends of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We believe that this session of the Forum will be particularly crucial to take this agenda one step further.

Importantly, the session provides a timely opportunity to re-emphasize the need to ensure that the post-2015 Development Agenda is truly inclusive and responsive to the rights and aspirations of indigenous peoples, while addressing inequality and discrimination faced by them.

Coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the adoption of ILO Convention No. 169 concerning indigenous and tribal peoples, the World Conference called for further ratification of the Convention and stressed the obligation of ratifying states to take systematic and coordinated action to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples.

Madame Chair,

As a contribution to the follow-up of the World Conference, the ILO joined forces with the Governments of Denmark and Mexico, the International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) and the University of Lucerne, to hold a seminar on 27 and 28 November 2014 in Geneva to take stock of the Convention on the occasion of its 25th anniversary and to elaborate recommendations for future action.

The seminar brought together, for the first time ever, representatives of ratifying and non-ratifying States, indigenous peoples' representatives, employers' and workers' organizations, independent experts and researchers, UN agencies, regional organizations and other stakeholders, and thereby served as an interactive multi-stakeholder platform for sharing lessons learned and country-level experiences. More than one hundred participants from Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa attended.

Let me share with you some of the main recommendations that emerged from the seminar (a summary of the discussions at the seminar is annexed to the ILO's written submission to the session).

Participants highlighted the urgent need to seize the momentum created by the World Conference for renewed efforts to promote enhanced ratification and implementation of the Convention. All stakeholders emphasized the need for increased awareness raising on Convention No. 169 and highlighted the need to strengthen capacity building for - and technical cooperation with - all relevant actors concerned, including government officials, indigenous peoples, private actors as well as employers' and workers' organizations.

A renewed campaign for ratification would need to identify and address obstacles to ratification, as well as provide information on the national implications of ratification for the countries concerned. Along with the ILO, relevant UN bodies and indigenous peoples' representatives, several participants suggested that ratifying States could play a leadership role in promoting enhanced ratification, including through international cooperation, high-level dialogues and exchanges of experiences.

All stakeholders at the seminar highlighted the importance of ratifying States taking the necessary measures to ensure the full and effective implementation of Convention No. 169. In this regard, the need for States to put in place a clear and effective regulatory framework and related practical guidance was emphasized. The role of research and assessments of existing law and practice was also highlighted as an important tool to identify implementation gaps and design appropriate responses.

Indeed, ensuring effective implementation remains an on-going challenges in most countries that have ratified the Convention. Yet, ratification has often led to major advances as regards national laws, policies and institutions for the realization of indigenous peoples' rights.

Numerous participants called for the strengthening of mechanisms and institutions at national level to ensure a continuous and institutionalized consultation and dialogue between indigenous peoples and other stakeholders. An on-going dialogue was considered as essential for building long-term trust and cooperation between, in particular, indigenous peoples and State actors, and for ensuring

the right of indigenous peoples to decide their own priorities for the process of development. The need for assistance to indigenous peoples' representative institutions with regard to their engagement in consultation processes as well as the importance of ensuring the full involvement of indigenous women in this regard was also highlighted.

Several participants called for greater access of indigenous peoples to the ILO supervisory mechanisms. In this regard, good practices for facilitating such access were highlighted, including examples of cooperation between governments and indigenous peoples. Among others, the cooperation between the Government of Norway and the Sami Parliament as well as partnerships between indigenous peoples and workers' organizations were highlighted as having enabled indigenous peoples to make submissions to the ILO's supervisory mechanisms.

Madame Chair,

There was a broad consensus among participants that the seminar had been an important platform for dialogue and resulted in a call for renewed action by all stakeholders for the enhanced ratification and implementation of the Convention. The ILO stands ready to work with key stakeholders, including governments, indigenous peoples, workers' and employers' organizations and UN sister agencies, towards this objective.