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UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

STATEMENT BY THE WORLD BANK ON
ITEM 7 (B) - HUMAN RIGHTS: A DIALOGUE WITH THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHTS OF
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS)

APRIL 27, 2015

DELIVERED BY
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The World Bank has a long history of engagement with Indigenous Peoples, which began in the 1980s. During the past two years, the World Bank has continued that tradition and taken it further than ever. In March of 2013 the Bank began a global dialogue with Indigenous Peoples with the objective of working together on a shared development agenda. We also wanted to obtain feedback on our safeguards review and update process, and from then to March of 2015, we held 24 dedicated meetings with Indigenous Peoples representatives from around the world.

Just two weeks ago, the Bank held a three day Global Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples at its headquarters in Washington, DC –we had the great pleasure of hosting many of the representatives gathered here today. The Dialogue included discussions on what we have heard from Indigenous Peoples during the second phase of the Bank’s safeguards review and update process, a presentation of a case-studies report on Bank -financed projects, and meetings with the Bank’s President, members of the Board of Directors, and senior management.

The objectives of the three-day Global Dialogue were:

First, to strengthen the relationship between the Bank and Indigenous Peoples;

Second, to improve on-the-ground collaboration for a more effective application of the Indigenous Peoples Policy;

And finally, to summarize the feedback that we have received from Indigenous People’s on the proposed Environmental and Social Standard 7, as well as to foster a focused discussion on the way forward.

During the meetings in Washington we also launched a report with eight case-studies of Bank-financed projects that have benefitted Indigenous Peoples. The case-studies touched on issues regarding land, poverty reduction, natural resources management, education, governance and community development. The projects show that the Bank is serious about producing positive, tangible and lasting impacts for Indigenous Peoples. We need more projects like those. That is why we need to continue working together with you as partners for development.



The Bank has also discussed development challenges during its global dialogue. We have discussed ways of further strengthening our partnership to work on those challenges, and the importance of designing a roadmap for our joint efforts to improve the lives of millions of Indigenous Peoples.

We already have a strong Indigenous Peoples policy in place, and we are doing our best to strengthen our safeguards even further in the proposed Environmental and Social Framework. We are committed to working closely with Indigenous Peoples and to focus on your concerns. In the first round of safeguards consultations, you told us to include clearer language for pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples living in voluntary isolation. The proposed standard for Indigenous Peoples includes those groups.

You also told us that Free, Prior, and Informed Consent is very important to you. That has also been included in our proposal.

As you know, some of our shareholders have expressed the view that identifying specific groups may exacerbate tensions in their countries. During the most recent consultation phase you told us that you are concerned about the alternative approach. We have heard you loud and clear and are in close discussion with our Board to agree on a policy that will maintain the high level of protections for Indigenous Peoples in Bank-financed projects.

Effective development means respect for the cultural identity, traditions, and the interests of groups that have been under-served and marginalized for many years, and that have much to offer in our modern world.

With the very important steps taken by the Bank and the Indigenous Peoples in these past two years, you can rest assured that the World Bank is one of your best global partners in the path towards a more peaceful and plentiful planet.

Thank you.