



**Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
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*Distinguished Chair and Members of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,
Representatives of Indigenous Peoples and Member States,
Friends and colleagues*

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in my capacity of UNDP Policy Advisor on Human Rights. I would like to congratulate you for your work and the Study on the right to participate in decision making that will no doubt constitute a very important contribution to UNDP's efforts to promote human development and human rights globally. It is also timely that this year marks the commemoration of the Right to Development Declaration, which recognizes human beings as subjects of rights and for which meaningful participation is entrenched in the Declaration. Of course meaningful participation cannot exist in a vacuum and in this regard strengthening governance systems grounded in human rights principles and in which poverty reduction policies are dependent on are intended to address social, economic and political exclusion.

As time is limited, I want to highlight just three initiatives that we have engaged on with the intention of strengthening our collaboration and implementation, firstly, the establishment of a consultative council in Nicaragua composed by the UN, indigenous peoples and afro-descendants, which is enabling an equal partnership and dialogue to ensure the application of the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues and inclusion of indigenous peoples' issues in the UN Development Assistance Framework in Nicaragua. The Council aims contributing to the effective implementation of ILO Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the country.

And secondly and in response to ensuring system-wide, inter-agency co-ordination and implementation at the country level, ILO, UNDP, OHCHR, UNICEF and more recently UNFPA have established the United Nations-Indigenous Peoples Partnership (UNIPP) and a multi-donor trust fund to advance this goal. The purpose of the Partnership is to strengthen the work of the UN at the country level and support capacities of States and indigenous peoples to enable effective partnerships, dialogue and consultation processes. Country activities will focus on priority areas such as legal and policy reform, including support to Universal Periodic Review processes, conflict prevention, access to justice and natural resources management. UNIPP

Policy Board is composed by representatives of the UN Agencies and 3 indigenous experts who have been selected based on nominations provided by the 3 UN Mechanisms on the rights of indigenous peoples. The first meeting of the UNIPP Policy Board will take place next week and we hope that with your strategic support to this Partnership will contribute in a meaningful way to the realization of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and your work in your countries and communities.

Finally, our joint efforts to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples must also benefit from the overall work to promote human rights in the UN system. A Human Rights Mechanism (the HRM) has been established by the Agencies to mainstream human rights in UN processes and programmes, particularly at the country level and of course support to the UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams forms part of the outcomes. All of these processes are aimed at ensuring that human rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples, are mainstreamed into national development processes and contribute to more inclusive and cohesive societies.