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ASIA CAUCUS

Statement on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

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The Asia Caucus is pleased to inform the UNPFII and others on the successful conduct of the Asia Preparatory Meeting on November 8-9, 2012 on the WCIP in Bangkok Thailand. This two-day prep meeting was attended by 52 indigenous participants representing indigenous peoples organizations from 13 countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Taiwan/China, Thailand and Vietnam). It was also attended by the Asia member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) and the Co-chair of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. The prep meeting was organized and hosted by the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), and was supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development—IFAD, the International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) and the UN Indigenous Peoples Programme (UNIPP)

This meeting came out with an agreed document called “A Call to Action from Indigenous Peoples in Asia to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP). This document contains thematic areas reflecting the concerns of indigenous peoples in Asia. These themes along with key recommendations in each theme include the call for the implementation of international commitments for sustainable development, the quest for self-determination and self-governance, the recognition of the right o lands, territories and resources; and the worsening militarization and conflicts in indigenous territories across Asia. The Asia Caucus is hereby submitting to the UNPFII this outcome document of the Asia indigenous peoples preparatory meeting for your information and guidance.

The Asia Caucus wants to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation of the initiative of the Saami Parliament to host and support the conduct of the global preparatory meeting to the WCIP in Alta in June this year. We believe this is a very critical step in formulating our common agenda and proposed outcome for the WCIP in 2014. We enjoin all regions to extend their full cooperation to this important global gathering of indigenous peoples to demonstrate our solidarity and unity to make the best of the WCIP in advancing our rights, welfare and aspirations. based on its objectives.

The Asia Caucus also wishes to draw the attention and support of the UN agencies to engage with indigenous peoples institutions and organizations especially at the national level to support their action plans and initiatives in line with the objectives of the WCIP. This shall include facilitation of dialogues between indigenous peoples and states towards the recognition of the identities of indigenous peoples as distinct from others and who are entitled to collective rights under the UN Declaration on the

Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). We also urge the UN agencies, funds and programme to support the capacity building of indigenous peoples as well as their advocacy activities for the implementation of the UNDRIP, monitoring and documentation of human rights concerns and in promoting and replicating good practices in sustainable resource management, climate change adaptation, sustainable development initiatives among others.

One of the critical area needing concerted efforts from UN agencies, indigenous organizations and institutions as well as from research institutions in the development of indicators and monitoring tools on the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights and Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as well as its implications in the target areas of Sustainable Development Goals. There is a need to interphase a rights-based approach to sustainable development and defining key indicators along this line is very important in achieving key measures for the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples. In this context, we strongly urge the UNPFII to play a key role in this regard in cooperation with UN agencies and indigenous organizations and institutions as, one of its contributions in achieving the objectives of the WCIP.

Finally, the Asia Caucus extends its full support to the appointment and the work of two co-chairs for the WCIP and to the efforts of the Global Coordinating Group (GCG) for the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the WCIP. We call on all member states of the UN to fully support the WCIP and engage constructively with indigenous peoples at the national level towards achieving the objective of the WCIP in realizing the rights of indigenous peoples.

Thank you.