

Madam Chairperson,

As I take the floor on the agenda item now being discussed in this Committee, first of all I would like to express deep appreciation of my delegation for the cogent and informative manner in which Professor Miguel Alfonso Martinez, a distinguished member of this Working Group as well as of the Sub-Commission has presented the outline of the study on the significance of Treaties, Agreements and other constructive arrangements for the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous populations.

My delegation would like to commend Professor Miguel Alfonso Martinez for his scholarly work which has found adequate reflection in the outline of the studies he has introduced before this Working Group. My delegation has full trust in his competence in undertaking such significant and arduous assignment which will contribute to the Working Group's central task of developing universal standards of indigenous rights.

In this context my delegation would like to reiterate its view expressed during the last session of the Human Rights Commission. We feel that in order to make the study a worthwhile exercise, attention should be focussed on clear cases rather than gray areas or hypothetical situations. This is necessary in the interest of economy of time, resources and energy of the Special Rapporteur.

My delegation is also of the opinion that in the interest of clarity and for avoiding any possible controversy, the study should scrupulously follow the internationally recognised definition of indigenous populations. Special care needs to be taken so that populations who are not of indigenous origin should not be covered for the purpose of the study. The other day one Observer Government spoke at length on the criteria of indigenous populations.

We are convinced that the contents of my intervention would find due consideration of the distinguished rapporteur, Professor Miguel Alfonso Martinez.

To conclude, I would like to assure Professor Miguel Alfonso Martinez the fullest co-operation of my delegation in the discharge of his responsibilities and wish him all success in his momentous work.

I thank you.