



**STATEMENT**  
BY THE  
HON. PAULINE SUKHAI, MP  
MINISTER OF AMERINDIAN AFFAIRS  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

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**Consolidated Report On Extractive Industries And Their Impact on Indigenous Peoples**

## **Good Morning Madam Chairman and all Participants**

As participants examine the situation of indigenous people's and extractive industries, Friday last in the final presentation of the day, the joint statement was read by the Guyana Organisation of Indigenous People (GOIP) and the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) of Guyana a number of inaccuracies about outstanding Amerindian land claims and Guyana' government rush to hand out lands for mining, forestry and other interests without the free prior and informed consent of the Amerindians and in violation of the collective rights of indigenous peoples, mining and other extractive activities, issues with the Amerindian Act, and the role of UNDP with regards to projects on indigenous lands.

The issues finds relevance to the topic under discussion today, the Government of Guyana approach through relevant sectoral ministries execute and apply a policy of balance and fairness, while ensuring and safeguarding the collective rights of Amerindians to land in the issuance of concessions to extractive industries and has always been consistent in not granting property rights for mining, forest or other interest in Amerindian village lands.

With regards to the assertion that miners rights supersedes that of the indigenous peoples land rights this is not the case; It must be noted that the Amerindian Act must not and does not appropriate lands from legal title holders, and our constitution protects the Guyanese people against deprivation of their property. The Amerindian law is harmonised with our national constitution and Madam Chair we must be reminded that the respect for the rule of law is fundamental to a civilized society and as a country we must uphold this, so as to continue to exist harmoniously in a diverse ethnic nation as Guyana.

In keeping with UNDRIP, The Amerindian law provides the indigenous peoples with the authority to make decisions and grant approval as is stipulated by law with respect to mining. Amerindian village Councils and the village members hold veto powers over small and medium scale gold mining. All mining conducted in any village should receive the explicit approval of village councils and subject to the legal process which involves negotiation with the applicant and full consultation with village members for approval. The negotiation process is steeped in FPIC as is stipulated in the Amerindian Act and presents no opportunity for top down approach by Government.

The few critics of the Amerindian Act continue to call for its revision, as it is felt that it is weak on land and mining rights. It must be recorded Madam Chair, that the Amerindian Act establishes a legal process to titling of lands, mining and for settling land claims. The Government continues to provide support to indigenous leaders and their people to ensure the safeguarding of their rights to the land they occupy and to protect their interest, while advising on good governance and improve decision making when negotiating agreements with miners and investors interested in establishing operations in village lands.

Madam Chairman

Regarding claim that profits from extractive industries have no trickle down effects to indigenous communities: I wish to provide clarity, the Amerindian Act on payment of "Fees, Royalties and Tributes" has significant scope for Amerindian villages development; Amerindian village council are the authority which receives tribute payments from mining operation conduct in their title lands. The challenge that exists is for more effort to be directed towards transparent and accountable sendings of the tributes collected by village councils, this is encouraged and supported by the government so that greater benefits can be derived for community development.

The government of Guyana supports the effort of the UNPFII to provide the space and opportunity for frank and effective discussions on the studies related to indigenous peoples experiences and impacts with extractive industries. Guyana stand only too willing to share our experiences and support on this issue.  
I thank you Madam Chair.

Pauline Sukhai M.P.  
Minister of Amerindian Affairs