

**High Level Plenary Meeting of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of UN General Assembly  
(World Conference on Indigenous Peoples)  
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United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**Implementing the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the National and Local Level**

Statement by Thomas Jalong, President of Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia/Indigenous Peoples' Network of Malaysia (JOAS)

Co-Chairs, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia (JOAS), a national umbrella of indigenous organisations from throughout Malaysia welcomes the WCIP Outcome Document (OD) which we view as another step forward towards the realization of the rights provided in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The WCIP OD incorporates, among others, reaffirmation of support and commitments by member states, including the Malaysian government, for the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples at the national and local level as well as different sectors of the indigenous peoples. We refer to, in particular, the paragraphs 3,4,7,8,15,17 and 18.

We welcome the reaffirmation of commitments by the government in paragraphs 3 and 4. We urge the government to also ratify international conventions and instruments that promotes and advance the rights of indigenous peoples, for e.g. the ILO Convention 169. We also call on the government to establish and institutionalize implementable consultation mechanisms and safeguards to ensure proper and meaningful consultation process with indigenous peoples to obtain our free, prior informed consent prior to adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures, and prior to designing and approval of development plans and projects that affect indigenous peoples. We urge that in areas where conflicts or disputes exist and are still unresolved between indigenous peoples and the states or corporations, a moratorium should be imposed pending just solutions. In areas where strong and persistent objections by indigenous peoples towards destructive and controversial projects are carried out, such projects or development plans should be withdrawn as an effective measure to show respect and protection of rights of indigenous peoples under the UNDRIPs.

In line with its commitments stipulated in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Outcome Document, we urge the Federal and State government to review laws, policies and administrative procedures so as to incorporate legal recognitions to the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples as prescribed under the UNDRIPs, as well as to amend and or repeal laws, policies and procedures which negate, deny or diminish the rights aforementioned. This process should be done in consultation with and through full and effective participation of indigenous peoples' representatives institutions, indigenous elders and experts, community-based organisations and representatives selected by indigenous peoples organisations, including JOAS.

We also welcome the commitments by government to cooperate with indigenous peoples, through our representative institutions, to collectively develop and implement national action plans, strategies, and other measures, to achieve the ends of the UNDRIPs. We urge the government to provide budgetary support and ensure uninterrupted access to facilities and services to indigenous peoples and indigenous-

based organisations to facilitate implementation of such national action plans, strategies and measures towards achieving the ends of the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. At the same time, we look forward to working closely with the government and its machineries to promote awareness of the UNDRIPs among all sectors of society, including members of legislatures, the judiciary, institutions of learning, schools, professional bodies, police, military, and the civil service.

On our rights to self-determination and governance, we reiterate our call to the government to respect and safeguard our rights to determine and choose development models that are appropriate to our peoples and communities' needs, capacity, aspirations, sense of security and well-being within our indigenous territories. Additionally, indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop our political, economic and social systems or institutions. We call for non-interference in the appointment of village and community chiefs and instead call for respect of the democratic and or consensual process of the communities for such appointments and positions.

On indigenous youth and women development, we strongly recommend concrete measures to be taken by the government in line with the commitments in paragraph 15 and 17 especially in the area of empowerment and capacity-building programmes. Comprehensive measures should be taken to cater to the needs of the youth and women in the rural areas and in their respective territories through consultation with them so as to identify their needs, priorities and aspirations. This should be followed by allocation of resources, skills-development and other support services and facilities.

**Thank you.**