

**UNITED NATIONS EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE
RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

**STATEMENT BY THE
OBSERVER DELEGATION OF CANADA**

ON

AGENDA ITEM 3:

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, INCLUDING
THE REVIEW OF THE MANDATE OF THE EXPERT MECHANISM**

DELIVERED BY:

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

JULY 20, 2015

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairperson,

The Government of Canada is pleased to reiterate its support for the work of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as reflected in our participation here today, and the financial assistance that Canada provided for the inter-sessional meeting of the Expert Mechanism that took place on March 9-10, 2015 in Winnipeg.

In the follow up to the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, Canada is fully committed to contributing to the on-going efforts of United Nations organizations to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We recognize that the United Nations is already engaged in important activities that address the rights and well-being of Indigenous Peoples and welcome the development of a system-wide action plan to ensure greater coherence and coordination to prevent duplication. A strategic, system-wide action plan is essential to responding more effectively to the needs of Member States and Indigenous Peoples by marshalling the comparative strengths of various mechanisms within the UN system while, at the same time, providing support to the three key UN mechanisms that deal with Indigenous issues – the Expert Mechanism, Special Rapporteur, and Permanent Forum.

Canada supports an enhanced role for all three of these key Indigenous mechanisms, which we believe can be achieved by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Expert Mechanism, Special Rapporteur, and Permanent Forum, and avoiding any overlap in activities. As others have noted, there is a need for improved coordination, between the Expert Mechanism and Permanent Forum in particular, perhaps through the creation of a coordinated, multi-year work plan to take advantage of specific areas of expertise and make the best use of limited resources. Improved working methods, including simpler reporting formats and the increased use of technology like video or teleconferencing, would also allow for the more targeted use of existing resources and strengthen all three Indigenous mechanisms.

With respect to the review of the Expert Mechanism's mandate, Canada believes it is important to maintain certain existing elements and focus on the value added research and thematic advice which the Expert Mechanism can provide. In our view it is also essential that EMRIP's annual sessions continue to serve as a space for dialogue between Member States and Indigenous Peoples. A greater focus on studies that highlight best practices by Member States in achieving the ends of the UN Declaration, including the innovative development and delivery of policies and programs, would also be useful. The Expert Mechanism might also, at the request of a Member State, and within existing resources, review and provide advice on possible improvements to domestic legislation and policy in relation to the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Mr. Chairman,

Canada has consistently supported the participation of Indigenous representatives at UN meetings on issues affecting them. As just one example, in addition to endorsing the objectives of the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, Canada also advocated for the meaningful participation of Indigenous representatives in the World Conference and its preparatory process.

It is also important to recognize the unique status of Indigenous Peoples. Their representatives should not need to rely on ad-hoc accreditation procedures, or accreditation through the NGO Committee. As suggested by the United States at the Permanent Forum in April 2015, Canada supports the creation of a new process for the accreditation of Indigenous representatives based on well-defined, selective criteria that would initially allow them to attend specific UN sessions that deal with topics of particular interest, submit written input, and make oral statements in accordance with established rules of procedure. Assuming the new process successfully meets the need for meaningful Indigenous participation, it could be expanded to include a wider range of UN meetings.

Canada looks forward to further discussion of these issues and welcomes, in particular, the views and suggestions of Indigenous representatives.

Thank you.