



**SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL STATEMENT TO THE
18TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON
INDIGENOUS ISSUES (UNPFII),
DELIVERED BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL HOUSE
OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS**

Mr Sipho Mahlangu

25 APRIL 2018,

NEW YORK

Agenda Item 4: " Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum
with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Issues"

Check against delivery

Mr
Madame Chair,

South Africa's constitution is premised on the fundamental principles and values of non-discrimination, equality and human dignity, working towards ensuring that the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms FOR ALL citizens are realized. In this regard the Government has always placed special emphasis on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights including the Right to Development. Therefore the implementation of the six mandated areas of the UNDRIP have to be considered in this context. SA's National Human Rights Commission continues to monitor Governments progress in this regard, with continued recommendations on how we can further promote, protect and fulfill these rights, including those of indigenous communities, evident by its recent report on the situation of human rights of the khoi and San.

Mr
Madame Chair,

Due to the prevailing conditions around majority of the Khoi & San communities, government, notwithstanding challenges, is embarking on various programmes and initiatives to reduce the level of violence, unemployment, poverty and substance abuse; with the aim of improving the livelihood and socio economic conditions of communities, including ensuring water security through equitable access to water and sanitation services for all. South Africa continues to prioritize access to education, and is currently developing the education curriculum policies to include the Khoi and san language family as well as strengthening an Africa-centred approach including substantive content on Khoi and San history.

The Government has realized that there can be no equitable economic benefit to the majority of South Africans without the issue of land ownership being resolved. In this regard, the South African government is currently seized with the issue of land redistribution, including for indigenous communities who have been dispossessed. Last month, our President, under the Land Reform Program handed-over land to successful claimants from the indigenous Khoi communities and other African communities.

In the area of environment Government has been actively facilitating, supporting and providing oversight into the development and conclusion of a number of Benefit Sharing Agreements between the Khoi-San community and Industry. Furthermore, in collaboration with SANPARKS and Management Authorities of World Heritage Sites

and National Parks we have put in place the necessary programs to ensure that indigenous communities are not denied access to the national parks as well as the heritage sites of cultural significance. Government continues raising awareness to the rich history, arts, culture, tradition and heritage of the Khoi-San people of SA . Its worth noting that recently Ms Esther Mahlangu, a traditional Ndebele artist, was honoured with a mural in New York to commemorate her work, .

~~Madam~~ ^{Mr} Chair,

South Africa has embarked on protecting traditional medicine in an effort to ensure the promotion and protection of the right of indigenous communities to their traditional medicines and health practices which include the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Note worthy in this regard is the establishment of a regulatory body entitled the 'Traditional Health Practitioners Council" aimed at among others, overseeing the regulation of traditional medicine products and promote and develop interest in traditional health practice. we have also launched a national campaign called "The Cheka Impilo campaign" to accelerate screening and testing for HIV, tuberculosis (TB), sexually transmitted infections and non-communicable diseases.

Finally, South Africa commits to ensuring the implementation of relevant recommendations of this Permanent Forum made over the years. We are pleased that the majority of these recommendations focus on the economic, social and cultural rights and are, broadly, in tandem with our National Development Plan which is a blueprint for ensuring sustainable development.

I thank you