

**World Conference on Indigenous Peoples: U.S. STATEMENT**

- Thank you. The United States co-sponsored UNGA Resolution 65/198, which provided for a high-level General Assembly meeting to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. Our support for this World Conference is consistent with the U.S. government's policy to honor and strengthen its relationship with Indian tribes and include the concerns of indigenous peoples in its broader policy objectives. In that spirit, we aim to help ensure appropriate and broad participation by indigenous peoples' representatives at the World Conference.
- The UN's indigenous regional caucuses are holding consultations to prepare for the Conference, including a June 10 preparatory commission in Alta, Norway. As the objective is to allow for broad indigenous input concerning the World Conference, it is important for the views of all indigenous peoples to be heard during these consultations, with no groups being marginalized.
- In many parts of the world, including my own, indigenous peoples have established leaders who are either elected through a democratic process or appointed through traditional processes to represent their peoples and their concerns.
- The contributions of indigenous peoples are critical. The process of admission to the World Conference should draw upon those chosen representatives of indigenous peoples, including tribal governments. In addition, there should be a voice for civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to participate in this Conference. All processes for selecting credible representatives of indigenous governments and peoples must be completely transparent. In this regard, we would appreciate periodic briefings on the selection process.
- The World Conference's interactive roundtables provide a platform for indigenous peoples' meaningful participation in the meeting. We think that the roundtable themes, to be decided by the General Assembly in accordance with Resolution 66/296, need not be limited to the specific context of the Declaration, but should be visionary and focus on current best practices. Possible topics could include:
  - Lands, resources, the environment, and economic development.
  - Cultures of indigenous peoples, including education.
  - Business and its impacts on indigenous peoples.
- Aside from the concise, action-oriented outcome document the GA resolution provides for, there could be a longer Chair's text that summarizes the roundtable and panel discussions on substantive issues.
- We also recommend that there be a mechanism for input – including in written, electronic, pre-recorded, or telephonic format – from indigenous peoples and others who may not be able to afford to attend the World Conference in person.
- The United States looks forward to working with member states and indigenous groups to make the World Conference a success. Thank you for your attention.