

**Statement by the observer delegation of Bangladesh under agenda item 9
[13th Session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations].**

Madam Chair,

My delegation takes the floor primarily on Agenda item 9.

Bangladesh had participated in the Copenhagen workshop on the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people, which was held pursuant to relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights and the UNGA. We found the occasion useful.

You will kindly recall that at the very outset of the workshop, concerns were expressed that there was no clear definition of "indigenous people" and since this was crucial for determining the scope of a possible permanent forum, discussions on detailed elements of the possible forum would be premature and difficult. There are clear implications also for the future of the WGIP, on the one hand, and on the other, for whether the question should move out of the ambit of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) a more eclectic umbrella, given the interest in incorporating a wide range of issues under such a forum. In this connection, it would be pertinent to note that the CHR, at its 51st session, had authorised the WGIP to continue for one year and meet for five days in 1995.

All this notwithstanding, we participated in the interest of pursuing an exchange of informal views. We therefore refrained from discussing fundamental questions including the merit of such a permanent forum. We also listened in to what others, particularly participants identifying themselves as indigenous, had to say. Discussions that followed therefore, related to, and I seek the indulgence of our good friend Mr. Littlechilde, a hypothetical permanent forum.

With regard to the outcome of the workshop, we were happy that views expressed at the workshop were fairly reflected in the final version of the draft document. One significant aspect of the deliberations of the workshop for many was the fact that participants other than representatives of governments had clearly stated that indigenous people are not tribal people. Your views, regarding the mandate of the WGIP were welcomed as very encouraging for dispelling confusion about distinguishing the tribal from the indigenous. This has however not been reflected in the document circulated by the Secretariat, and it is the feeling of many participants that the document as circulated does not reflect the significant aspects of the deliberations of the Copenhagen

WGIP 95 GOV/SAS.BGD/3

Workshop. Many delegations would therefore find it difficult to consider the document circulated by the Secretariat as an adopted outcome of the Workshop.

We sincerely hope that an appropriate revised document shall be made available on the basis of the agreed final version.

I would like to draw the attention of the Secretariat further to paragraph 29 under E, lines 1 and 2 on page 7 of the document. The expression "draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples" needs to be put within quotes, or alternatively the 's' of 'peoples' has to be dropped.

Before concluding, Madam Chair, I would like to support the position of our Brazilian colleague with regard to the proposed publication of "periodic thematic reports or indigenous yearbook". Indeed, it would be very difficult to react to the proposal without reference to the specific contents of such a document.

I thank you, Madam Chair.