

Remarks by Mr. Luis Evelis Andrade Casama, Indigenous Senator of Colombia and representative of the Latin American and the Caribbean Indigenous region on behalf of the Global Indigenous Coordinating Group for the opening session of the High Level Plenary of the United Nations General Assembly to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

September 22, 2014
United Nations, New York

Mr. President of the General Assembly, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, Honorable Ministers and Ambassadors, heads of delegations, my Indigenous relations, ladies and gentlemen.

[Insert traditional greeting]

We welcome and support the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. We are therefore pleased that this Outcome document will be adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

We acknowledge and congratulate the four advisors for their effort and hard work, especially our indigenous sister and brother who were assisting in this process, Dr. Myrna Cunningham and Mr. Les Malezer.

We would also like to acknowledge the Alta Outcome Document in this process, particularly the fundamental principles and aspirations of our peoples contained therein, which have formed an important basis for the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

Mr. President, our regions want to underscore the importance of several provisions of the Alta Outcome Document, whose implementation is crucial for us, and we are very pleased to see many of them in this Outcome Document.

For our peoples, to see the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples reaffirmed and committed to in the Outcome Document is an important step towards the recognition, promotion and protection of the rights and freedom of Indigenous Peoples. The provisions that conform to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provide for and ensure the exercise of the fundamental collective rights of our peoples, especially rights to our lands, territories and resources which underpin our well-being, our right to freely determine our political status as well as our right to freely pursue our economic, social and cultural development.

We recall the responsibility of Member States to incorporate in legislation, policies and programmes the articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to guarantee their effective implementation. This will require real political will on the part of Member States and the introduction of structural reforms in the States concerned.

We therefore call upon national and international agencies and agencies of the United Nations system to include in their policies and programmes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to ensure its effective and consistent application.

Mr. President, we commit to work with Member States to establish mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the right and principle of Free Prior and Informed Consent, particularly in the context of extractive industries and other major development projects affecting our lands and territories. We will also help to ensure that Free, Prior and Informed Consent is implemented in the case of all legislative and administrative measures affecting Indigenous Peoples, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We are pleased that Member States have reaffirmed the significant contribution of Indigenous Peoples in the promotion of sustainable development with full respect for economic, social, cultural and environmental rights and the needs of present and future generations. We therefore commit to work to develop strategies at the national and international level on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

We request Member States, in the framework of this Outcome Document, and with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, to develop national level processes to harmonise policies, laws and regulations with international instruments and commitments in order to ensure the effective implementation of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other international instruments.

Mr. President, we will continue to work very hard for the implementation of this Outcome Document. We hope that Member States will bring to the fore their resources, expertise and political commitment to make this Outcome Document successful within a framework of respect and solidarity with Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you Mr. President.