



**7th Session of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Agenda item 7: UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

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Mr Chair,
Distinguished members of the Expert Mechanism,
Indigenous representatives, distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen.

I have the honour to address the Expert Mechanism in my capacity as the Technical Secretariat of United Nations Indigenous Peoples Partnership (UNIPP).

Launched in 2011, UNIPP is a collaborative framework established by the ILO, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA as a commitment to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), in particular Article 41, which calls upon the organs and specialized agencies of the UN system *...to contribute to the full realization of the provisions of the Declaration through the mobilization, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance.*

In addition Article 42 provides that *"the United Nations, its bodies, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and specialized agencies, including at the country level, and States shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration."*

These provisions led the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) to make a specific recommendation to the ILO, OHCHR and UNDP to enhance inter-agency coordination at the country level with a focus on the promotion and implementation of indigenous peoples' rights. UNICEF and UNFPA joined the initiative in 2011.

Mr Chair, the purpose of UNIPP is to support capacities of multiple actors, in particular governments and indigenous peoples, to establish effective dialogue processes, partnerships and mechanisms aimed at guaranteeing indigenous peoples' rights. UNIPP is the first global inter-agency rights-based initiative with a programmatic focus on indigenous peoples primarily at the country level.

Overseen by a Policy Board that includes five indigenous members, with one of them being the Board's Co-Chair, UNIPP currently implements joint country-based projects in Bolivia, Nicaragua,

Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Nepal and one regional project in Southeast Asia. The countries covered are home to approximately 100 million indigenous people (equating to 30 per cent of the total world population).

Mr Chair, let me highlight that many, if not most, of the activities being implemented with UNIPP support are a follow-up to specific recommendations issued by the UN mechanisms that deal mainly with indigenous peoples, namely the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as recommendations emanating from the UN human rights treaty bodies, the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review, and the ILO supervisory mechanisms.

Mr Chair, distinguished members of the Expert Mechanism,

UNIPP's main strength lies in the combined expertise and experience of its key partners, within and outside the UN system - indigenous peoples; government officials; civil society organizations; private sector; and of course donors.

Although it's only been two years since its launch, the Partnership has successfully provided an impetus in bringing together more than 100 partners through its 110 projects and initiatives around the world, broadening its reach in developing programmes that have real and lasting impact on indigenous peoples' lives.

In the spirit of "Delivering as One", the Partnership embodied the principles of consultation and participation, which allowed different partners to have forged alliances that is essential in ensuring States adhere to international standards on indigenous peoples; strengthen the capacities of State institutions to have indigenous peoples' rights included and recognized within the national legal framework; broadened indigenous peoples access to culturally pertinent education, health services and; and increased their confidence and opportunities to make their voices heard in decision-making processes.

To illustrate the work undertaken by UNIPP so far, let me highlight some major outcomes and experiences:

- UNIPP's initiative to support legal and policy reform, democratic governance and access to justice has resulted in the development of 8 national decrees (Republic of Congo), the reform of 2 national laws (Cameroon) and the drafting and review of 16 new local/municipal and national laws on indigenous peoples (Bolivia, CAR, Nicaragua, Philippines, Indonesia and Cameroon). This on-going initiative aims to ensure the recognition and inclusion of indigenous peoples' rights within local and national legal systems.
- UNIPP has provided capacity building training to more than 5,500 government officials, indigenous peoples and other key stakeholders.

- UNIPP has produced 13 studies on thematic issues of special relevance to indigenous peoples, in relation to maternal health and reproductive rights, HIV/AIDS, and working conditions in the forestry sectors.
- In Bolivia, Nicaragua and Republic of Congo, UNIPP activities are being implemented not only by the Participating UN Agencies (ILO, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA) but also in cooperation with other UN entities, e.g. UN Women IFAD, WHO, UNESCO, UNV, WFP; other intergovernmental organization, e.g. International Organization for Migration (OIM); and other donors, e.g. Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and the Embassy of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg in Nicaragua through UN Volunteers.
- In Cameroon, CAR and Republic of Congo, UNIPP activities enjoyed strong support from international NGOs and donors such as Plan International, Association des Pères Spiritains au Congo (ASPC), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), European Union, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA- through the ILO) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).
- UNIPP-supported projects have served as catalysts in mobilizing additional resources for initiatives that address indigenous peoples' issues at the country level: an estimated USUSD 3.7 million in additional funds have been raised.
- At the country level, UNIPP Bolivia have benefitted from a generous support from the European Union, amounting to 1 million Euros and additional USUSD 200,000 from the Embassy of Denmark in La Paz (DANIDA).
- UNIPP Trust Fund has been a source of inspiration in the creation of another joint thematic programme- the UN Partnership to promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Donor Trust Fund (UNPRPD MDTF).
- Finally, many of the projects that pre-dated UNIPP at the country and regional level would simply have ceased activity without its support. In its implementation, UNIPP has built on existing mechanisms and activities, drawing on local knowledge and previous experience and lessons learned on the ground.

Word is getting out about UNIPP. Governments, indigenous organizations and UN Country Team in areas neighbouring existing UNIPP programmes regularly approach UNIPP seeking assistance, indicating that the Partnership is responding to real needs.

Mr. Chair, UNIPP has been fortunate to enjoy strong support from the governments of Denmark, Finland and Ireland in its start-up phase. Nevertheless, it urgently requires additional funding if it is to broaden its reach and fulfil its objectives, to bring about lasting improvements in the lives of the world's indigenous peoples. UNIPP programmes have already brought together more than 100 partners around the world, and new partners are always welcome.