

**13th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
11-23 May, 2014  
UN Headquarters, New York**

**Closing Day:  
Special Discussion on World Conference on Indigenous Peoples**

**Intervention by:  
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23 May, 2014**

Madame Chairperson,

We at the Permanent Forum have been listening very carefully to the voices of the indigenous peoples and of states at the Forum's plenary sessions and in informal meetings. And what we hear from the indigenous peoples' representatives is not just concern, but alarm, at the developments over the last two weeks, and several weeks before that [with regard to the delay in announcing a clear road map with equal, direct and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the process of decision-making on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the reluctance of certain states to facilitate such participation].

The two governmental advisers of the President of the General Assembly (PGA), the Permanent Representatives of Slovenia and Costa Rica, have been waiting for weeks to play out their due role. They have waited in vain. We appreciate the goodwill on the part of several governments and indigenous peoples' representatives, their patience and spirit of accommodation.

[With the on-going delays,] given the best of circumstances, if the mandated Interactive Hearing is to take place within June, as prescribed in the General Assembly's Modalities resolution (UN Doc: A/RES/66/296), representatives of indigenous peoples would face severe difficulties in preparing for the hearing. But without a clear roadmap outlining that indigenous peoples would be in the "co-drivers" seat, it does not seem that indigenous peoples will participate in the event.

And let us be clear. Indigenous peoples' wish to be in the co-drivers' seat. So states and IPs must work together. Indigenous peoples will not be able to steer in a particular direction without the states agreeing. States and indigenous peoples must work together.

Since Rio (Earth Summit, 1992), the UN has opened up to non-state actors. At Rio+5 (Special Session of the UN General Assembly to Review and Appraise the Implementation of Agenda 21, New York, 23-27 June, 1997), representatives of indigenous peoples, along with civil society representatives, participated in a full formal session of the General Assembly, at high levels, with kings, presidents and prime ministers. That is a precedent.

We are concerned that where there is disagreement on the part of governments with regard to the nature of non-state participation in a GA meeting, the PGA will not provide a ruling. If that means passing the matter on to the General Assembly again, many fear that this might open up the entire Modalities Resolution, undoing the positive developments.

As several statements made today reminds us: *The concerned General Assembly's Modalities Resolution was adopted by consensus. If the General Assembly were to weaken the resolution, this would be a serious disservice to the indigenous peoples of the world and would seriously undermine indigenous peoples' faith and confidence upon the United Nations.*

We would like to still hope that there is a way out. Strong leadership from the PGA, but also bold leadership from the states, can hopefully lead us out of the impasse.

Thank you.