

Statement by Mrs. Yaneisy Acosta Hernández, representative of the delegation of the Republic of Cuba, to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, on Agenda Item 3: *Indigenous peoples: development with culture and identity: articles 3 and 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, New York, 19 April, 2010.

Mr. Chairman,

For over two decades, indigenous people from all regions of the world have been peacefully calling for the international community to adopt a specific document endorsing the protection to indigenous peoples at the international level.

The adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples constituted a historic victory in the fight of these peoples for the recognition of their legitimate ancient rights.

Cuba considers the adoption of the Declaration cannot be the end of the process, but the beginning of a new stage on which we must work together for the effective recognition of the equality and the right to self-determination of more than 370 million indigenous people in the world, as well as their right to keep their own institutions, cultures, and spiritual traditions, without suffering due to racism and discrimination.

Along with ILO Convention 169, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is an international referent to establish national guidelines, which will contribute to the actions included in the Second Decade of Indigenous Peoples.

In the framework of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, significant results have been already attained in the search for a solution to the problems faced by indigenous peoples. We must continue to work with a view to achieving the five goals guiding the activities of this Second Decade.

Mr. Chairman,

Cuba reaffirms Article 3 of that Declaration, establishing the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination and to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

While progress has been achieved in establishing human rights standards for indigenous peoples, which account for over 5% of the world's population, they continue to daily face serious violations of those rights. Issues like violence, marginalization, dispossession of their land, forced removal or relocation, denial of land rights, among others, are a regrettable reality in indigenous communities in many parts of the world.

Actions must be urgently taken without delay to ensure indigenous peoples the right to own and use their land and its resources. Few are the countries recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples to the land.

Cuba reaffirms that the Human Rights Council and its subsidiary organs shall pay special attention to the full realization of all human rights of indigenous peoples in accordance with the Declaration.

The role of the United Nations in this Second Decade should not be limited to defining the rights of indigenous peoples. On the other hand, it is unacceptable that those rights are tried to be integrated into development parameters that are rejected by virtually most of those peoples for being alien to their idiosyncrasy and vital needs.

As in the past, Cuba will continue supporting the just demands of indigenous peoples for the effective realization and free exercise of their rights.

Thank you