



STATEMENT

BY THE

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“Follow up on the Outcome of the World Conference on the Indigenous Peoples and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

Twentieth Session - United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Friday April 23, 2021

Greetings to the Chairperson & All Distinguished Delegates

The following actions point to important aspects impacting on indigenous people's development vis-a-vie the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The Government of Guyana supports extensively Amerindian peoples' right to land. Legislative actions to guarantee land tenure security are enshrined in the Amerindian Act of 2006. Currently, the Amerindian Land Tenure Project has resumed after a five (5) year pause and the intent is to once and for all conclude all Amerindian land titling matters. Amerindians currently own an estimated 14% of Guyana's land mass and this is intended to be substantially increased to an estimated 20% at the end of the Amerindian Land Titling Project (ALT), for which US \$6.3M is allocated in the National Budget of 2021.

The Government of Guyana continues to support Amerindian village agriculture development. The National Budget of 2020 and 2021 allocated funds to procuring 112 tractors with implements (plough and chippers) to support and advance the

village agriculture. This is expected to boost productivity, income and food security. Grant funding is provided to the Village Councils for investments in a wide range of economic and productive micro projects.

Amerindian students benefit from universal primary education and efforts to increase access to secondary and university opportunities are a work in progress. A number of measures exists to support all categories of students from pre-school to University; scholarships, school uniforms and school supplies, cash grants, school feeding programme, school transportation and accommodation. In the 2020 academic year, the largest number of national scholarships were awarded to Amerindian students pursuing university education.

To ensure Amerindian students benefit from the 20,000 online scholarships offered by the Government of Guyana, 200 villages will benefit from free internet connectivity so that Amerindian youths can participate in the online scholarship programme.

Finally, the theme of this year's conference: referencing SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; the Government of Guyana has established and funded the Indigenous Peoples Commission: a Rights Commission that has oversight over the country's First People and is readily available to address any claims of discrimination. Modern legislation now exists which provide legal coverage over the Rights of Guyana's First Peoples.

I trust that we remain safe during this difficult period of COVID 19.

Thank you.