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**OFFICE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS**

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
15<sup>th</sup> Session (9-20 May 2016)  
New York

*Item 3 - Follow-up on the recommendations of the Permanent Forum: (a) Outcome of the high-level plenary meeting also known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples*

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Statement by Mr. Martin Oelz, ILO

Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples has brought a new dimension to our common efforts towards achieving the ends of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The statement of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (IASG) has highlighted the steps taken collectively by the UN system entities as a follow-up to the World Conference in order to advance on coordination, collaboration and joint action on indigenous peoples' issues.

In addition to contributing to these efforts at the inter-agency level, the ILO has taken steps to strengthen its own capacity to address indigenous peoples issues within our mandate to promote social justice and decent work for all, which includes hosting Convention No. 169 concerning indigenous and tribal peoples.

Taking into account the call by the World Conference for further ratification of the Convention, the ILO joined forces with the Governments of Denmark and Mexico, the International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) and the University of Lucerne, to hold a seminar in November 2014 in Geneva to take stock of the Convention on the occasion of its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

A first of its kind, the seminar brought together representatives of ratifying and non-ratifying States, indigenous peoples' representatives, employers' and workers' organizations, independent experts and researchers and international organizations to share lessons learned and make recommendations for future action.



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The seminar's outcomes subsequently served as a contribution for developing a first-ever ILO Strategy for action concerning indigenous and tribal peoples, which was discussed and endorsed by the ILO Governing Body in November 2015.<sup>1</sup>

The 2015 ILO strategy for action is underpinned by the conviction that ensuring the rights of indigenous peoples is fundamental for achieving inclusive and sustainable development for all. Key elements of the strategy include promoting Convention No. 169, strengthening institutionalized dialogue between indigenous peoples and state institutions, supporting indigenous peoples livelihoods, improved working conditions and access to social protection, including a focus on tackling the barriers and challenges faced by indigenous women and persons with disabilities.

The strategy also envisages action to address the existing knowledge and data gaps on the socio-economic conditions of indigenous peoples, which will be crucial for assessing the impact of policies and progress made, particularly with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Chairperson,

Despite the visibility of Convention No. 169, its content, added value and implications often remain unknown to policy- and decision-makers, ILO constituents, and indigenous and tribal peoples, particularly at the local level. The ILO will continue, and indeed intensify, its efforts to promote a better understanding of the Convention's provisions among key stakeholders.

A number of countries have expressed the intention to ratify the Convention, including in the context of the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review. With a view to promoting ratification and effective implementation, the ILO stands ready to facilitate and support dialogue among ILO constituents and representative organizations of indigenous peoples; preliminary assessments of compliance and implications; and capacity building for establishing a legal, policy and institutional framework suitable for the Convention's application.

The right to consultation and participation of indigenous peoples is crucial for enhancing policy coherence, reconciling interests, achieving agreements and creating favourable environments for development. The ILO supervisory bodies frequently draw attention to gaps in the implementation of the Convention's provisions with regard to consultation and participation, both as regards specific development projects and more broadly regarding development plans and public policies. Where procedures for consultation and participation exist, their functioning is often challenged by weak capacity of the actors involved and distrust between the parties, among other difficulties.

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.ilo.org/gb/GBSessions/GB325/pol/WCMS\\_412809/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/gb/GBSessions/GB325/pol/WCMS_412809/lang--en/index.htm) and [http://www.ilo.org/gb/GBSessions/GB326/ins/WCMS\\_450050/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/gb/GBSessions/GB326/ins/WCMS_450050/lang--en/index.htm)



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Promoting institutionalized dialogue between indigenous and tribal peoples and state institutions, as well as capacity building for ILO constituents and indigenous and tribal peoples' organizations for establishing and strengthening procedures for consultation and participation will therefore be a strategic focus the ILO, including through joint action with UN partners.

Creating sound mechanisms for consultation will not only be key for realizing the commitments made at the World Conference, including the implementation of UNDRIP and Convention No. 169, but also crucial for achieving the SDGs and effective climate change action.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.