



**THIRD SESSION OF THE  
PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS  
ISSUES  
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK:  
10-21 MAY 2004**

***UNDP STATEMENT ON ITEM 4(a) ECONOMIC  
AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
18 MAY 2004 – CONFERENCE ROOM II***





**Third Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

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**UNDP Statement on Item 4(a) economic and social development**

**18 May 2004 Conference Room II**

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished members of the Permanent Forum;  
Distinguished representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations,  
Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations Development Programme is pleased to participate in the third session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. We welcome the Permanent Forum as a major contribution to the UN system and commit ourselves to work in partnership with indigenous peoples' organizations, UN agencies, and governments towards implementing its recommendations.

UNDP's work over the past year has marked a shift from policy making to programme development and promoting action on the ground. Without repeating what has already been shared in our background paper, we would like to highlight a few of our initiatives.

At the global level a growing number of divisions and bureaus are increasingly involved in working with indigenous peoples.

The Equator Initiative, which you will hear more about later from my colleagues in environment, is working to create a global movement through a three-part programme to reduce poverty along with the conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits from biodiversity.

The Community-Based Initiative, which was launched this past year, is a working group set up to promote deeper interaction between UNDP and community organizations to realize the MDGs. The goal is to learn from community action to advance the MDGs. A set of regional

workshops has been planned in 2004 to engage communities in the MDGs and further South-South cooperation.

The Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme is seeking to better address indigenous peoples' concerns and find ways for the GEF SGP to be more accessible to indigenous peoples.

UNDP's Energy and Environment Group together with the Global Environment Facility have taken the lead in developing a Practice Note on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) and Traditional Knowledge (TK).

UNDP has also benefited from the support in human resources provided by the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia during the last year.

In efforts to implement UNDP's policy of engagement and head towards achieving the MDGs, the development of programmes aimed at indigenous peoples is key, but requires further advocacy and support.

We would like to highlight two such examples of indigenous peoples' programming.

In September 2003, UNDP launched the *Regional Initiative on Strengthening Policy Dialogue on Indigenous, Highland and Tribal Peoples' Rights and Development* (RIPP). The objectives of the project are to strengthen the policy dialogue and coordination on Indigenous, Highland and Tribal Peoples' rights and sustainable development. The project aims to enhance inter-country sharing of experiences on priority issues: Natural Resource Management; Land and Resource Rights; and Indigenous Knowledge, Culture and Education, particularly with regard to reducing the incidence of poverty among indigenous peoples. It aims to build capacity among all stakeholders, strengthen information networks and knowledge management systems among indigenous peoples, to support their full and effective participation in policy dialogue. The project will be led from Thailand and the participating countries include Cambodia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

**HURIST**, a human rights strengthening programme jointly implemented by UNDP and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), is in the process of developing three pilot projects focusing on identifying best practices and learning opportunities in the development of national capacity for the promotion and protection of human rights and in the application of a human rights approach to development programming. The key underlying principle is to promote the full participation of indigenous peoples in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the projects that (may) affect them. In March this past year we held the initial programming meeting for the pilot project in Ecuador. Another pilot will be launched in Kenya in late June.

In addition to developing programmes that directly focus on indigenous peoples, we are also ensuring the participation of indigenous peoples in our broader activities, particularly in the arena of the Millennium Development Goals, the MDGs.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are an ambitious agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives that world leaders agreed on at the Millennium Summit in September 2000.

Achieving these goals requires the contribution of all development actors around the world. And UNDP sees indigenous peoples and their organizations as one of those partners that can provide the skills and creativity to making them happen.

UNDP recognizes that the MDGs can provide an overall framework for furthering indigenous peoples' development. UNDP organized a regional workshop in Kenya (the first in a planned series in different regions) in July 2003 aimed at increasing understanding and awareness of the importance of local community action to achieve the MDGs. Community representatives at the workshop defined how they wanted to approach the MDGs: through strategies to improve food security and water and land management, combat HIV/AIDS and sustain the environment while promoting development. More than 100 representatives of grassroots, community based, non-governmental and indigenous peoples' organizations and local governments from 11 countries in Africa shared experiences.

The workshop produced 40 learning exchange agreements. These agreements facilitate the exchange of knowledge and instructive practice between one community and another. Among the 10 to be implemented this year nearly half will support exchanges among indigenous peoples' communities.

At the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 7) held in Malaysia in February 2004, UNDP organized the Community Kampung, a community dialogue space, that brought together representatives of communities and indigenous peoples with international government and CSO leaders for a frank exchange on how to develop an enabling environment for community participation in global biodiversity conservation.

Nevertheless, we also understand that if we want to achieve the MDGs, we must pay particular attention to indigenous peoples. As stressed in the recent visit of the Secretary General to the Andean region of Latin America special attention must be placed on indigenous peoples if the MDGs are to be achieved. UNDP's Regional Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean takes this challenge seriously and is striving to determine the best means to assess the specific development needs. In the meantime, a survey of UNDP's activities in the region has been prepared to assist in this process. UNDP's RBLAC with the support of the CSO Division is currently developing initiatives at the national and regional level that seek to create a network of professional experts focused in generating strategies and programmes, and providing high level policy advice to address the development needs and demands of indigenous groups in the region.

We must use effectively the UNDP presence and its coordinating role at the country level to bring home the message of engagement with indigenous peoples. We recognize our engagement can be uneven in some countries. We are very active in some and not in others. However, some countries have ensured the coordination of UN agencies when engaging with

indigenous peoples. It is important to highlight that the UN Development Group (UNDG), which UNDP heads, has decided that indigenous issues will be among the 2004 priorities. We hope this will encourage more country offices to take action.

UNDP seeks to work in close collaboration with you in achieving these ambitious MDGs, the development of the MDG Country Reports that monitor the progress of the goals, in jointly developing campaigns at local and national levels as well as in partnering operationally. We hope to encourage improved dialogue between our country offices and your peoples in both making the MDGs happen and ensuring the implementation of the UNDP policy of engagement on indigenous peoples.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the last year we have supported work being undertaken on data collection and disaggregation and free, prior and informed consent. UNDP understands the importance of disaggregated data for development, but it is important to note that pushing for information on indigenous peoples requires advocacy and brokering because of potential political tensions. We call on governments to gather data on indigenous peoples including further disaggregation of indigenous women, youth and children, and stands ready to assist them in this effort. We have coordinated the interagency paper on free prior and informed consent and look forward to discussing how to move forward.

This year we are pleased to announce further support to the Permanent Forum Voluntary Fund to carry out its recommendations.

Last week you heard from my colleagues of the Human Development Report Office who discussed the issues the Human Development Report 2004 will be addressing on issues related to multiculturalism, cultural diversity and human development. These policy advocacy documents, supported by UNDP, aim to take stock of human development at country-level and to stimulate public debate and political attention to most pressing development priorities through their alternative people-centred analysis and recommendations. In the next two-three years, UNDP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific has proposed to develop an Asian Regional Human Development Report focusing on indigenous peoples.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

While we are making progress in increasing the involvement of indigenous peoples' organizations in the development debate, we still have a long road ahead of us and multiple political and financial challenges to address. Key to working together will be making use of each other's comparative advantages, expertise and knowledge. In addition, UNDP's CSO Advisory Committee that directly advises the Administrator on key policy and programmatic initiatives serves as a useful platform to advocate increased engagement with indigenous peoples. We hope that through the initiatives that have been undertaken this year, we can strengthen support to indigenous peoples' communities. Furthermore, the national and regional human development reports and the MDG Reports provide unique opportunities for data to be disaggregated and disseminated. These tools and mechanisms can provide

possible entry points for highlighting the situation of indigenous peoples, advocating for policy changes, potentially shifting policy and carrying forward the recommendations of the Forum.

We recommend your active participation and substantive engagement in the following UN processes over the next year, among others, Beijing+10, the UN Five Year review of the Millennium Declaration and the Global Conference on the Role of CSOs in Conflict Prevention.

Lastly, we also recommend that the Forum members consider including significant progress towards the MDGs as a key item among its recommendations for the upcoming year.

Thank you.