

*(Check against delivery)*



# BRAZIL

**Item 3(a): Outcome of the High Level Plenary Meeting of the  
General Assembly known as the World Conference on  
Indigenous Peoples**

**Statement by**

**H.E. Ambassador Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota**

**Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN**

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

New York, April 20, 2015

Madam Chair,

In September last year, we held the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, with broad and active participation of indigenous representatives.

The significance of its outcome brings new hope of international politics changing for the better under a more open, effective and caring UN.

Brazil reaffirmed its commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and is developing national strategies to achieve the goals of the Declaration.

In 2006, we established the National Commission for Indigenous Policies with a view to integrating indigenous peoples in the elaboration and implementation of public policies that concern them.

An Inter-Ministerial Working Group is currently drafting specific regulations to implement the provisions of the ILO Convention 169.

A National Healthcare Policy for Indigenous Peoples attributes special attention to the traditional knowledge, medicines and practices of indigenous peoples.

Concrete steps are being taken to make our educational system more supportive of the cultural and linguistic diversity of indigenous peoples.

Notwithstanding such progress, we are aware of the need to do much more.

Madam Chair,

Brazil acknowledges the initiative of the Secretary-General, in line with the provisions of the Outcome Document, to appoint Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo to coordinate the action plan, raise awareness of the rights of indigenous peoples at the highest possible level and increase the coherence of the UN system in this regard.

A questionnaire was sent to Member-States that should guide the work of the Secretary-General in drafting a Report on the System Wide Action Plan.

It is a matter of concern to Brazil that the consultation process for the drafting of the Report on the Action Plan does not seem conducive to comprehensive indigenous peoples participation.

It is clear that only few groups are usually able to project their voices in the international fora. The System Wide Action Plan would lack legitimacy if there is not enough time and safeguards that ensure their participation in consultations and not enough effort to reach out to indigenous peoples in different parts of the world, many of whom have no access to modern system of communication as "online surveys".

Madam Chair,

The Brazilian Constitution of 1988 and subsequent legislation are consistent with the key provisions of the Declaration. Over eight hundred thousand Brazilians identify themselves as members of more than three hundred different indigenous peoples. They speak no less than two hundred and seventy different languages. There are 688 indigenous territories in Brazil, encompassing an area of almost 1.1 million square kilometers. That amounts to more than 12% of the national territory. It is certainly the world's largest portion of acknowledged indigenous lands.

We expect there will come a day when the participation of representatives of indigenous peoples in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies will no longer be a matter for consideration on an "ad hoc" basis.

Indigenous issues need a systemic approach.

First and foremost, we must strengthen the UN mechanisms that deal with indigenous issues.

The Outcome Document has invited the Human Rights Council to review the mandates of its existing mechanisms, with a view to improving the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Brazil has long upheld the Permanent Forum should be a venue for the representation of indigenous peoples at the UN. A channel for dialogue between indigenous representatives and Member States.

We expect that Member States include information on the situation of the rights of indigenous peoples, including measures taken to pursue the objectives of the Declaration, during the Universal Periodic Review Process, as the Outcome Document encourages us to do so.

Madam Chair,

Over the centuries, the rights of indigenous peoples have been undermined by violence and discrimination; extreme poverty; unequal access to education and health services; social and economic inequality; disregard for indigenous culture, traditional knowledge, faith and languages; and by the dispossession of lands, territories and resources.

Our role as Member-States of the United Nations is to change this stark reality.

It is important that Governments, civil society, international organizations and representatives of indigenous people join forces to ensure the implementation of the Outcome Document of the World Conference. We should consider it an action

platform that contributes to making the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples an effective framework for those it seeks to respect, protect and promote.

Thank you, Madam Chair."