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Talking Points for Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

On the Occasion of the Fourth Session Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Special theme: the Millennium Development Goals And Indigenous Peoples

16 May 2005, 3pm
Conference Room 2

Date and time: Monday 16 May 2005, 3pm
Venue: Conference Room 2, UN Secretariat Building
Chair of session: Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (Tebtebba Foundation, Philippines)
Format & Objective: There are 16 Members of the Indigenous Peoples Forum; over 1000 representatives from indigenous peoples organizations, NGOs, academics and UN agencies will be attending the two-week event.

The format for this session is dialogue with the agencies. The focus for this session is Goal one: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, to be addressed under the thematic approach of combating poverty, good practice and barriers to implementation.
Brief prepared by: Alejandra Pero, CSO division
Edited and Finalized by: RN

Order of speakers

1. Ms. Louise Arbor, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
2. Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, UN Chief of Staff and UNDP Administrator
3. Mr. Jeffrey Sachs, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General
4. Professor Arjun Sengupta, Special Rapporteur on human rights and extreme poverty at the Commission on Human Rights

Each presentation will be around 10 minutes. An open dialogue with UN agencies, panelists and Permanent Forum members will follow the presentations.

There may be specific questions to the UN system which you may need to respond to on behalf of UNDP/UNDG (ILO, UNICEF, WHO, UN Habitat etc.)

Questions may include why are indigenous peoples absent from the MDGs process and in particular, the Millennium Project Report; why is it that what is happening at the global level is disconnected from the local level and what takes place in country offices.

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (Tebtebba Foundation, Philippines) is a new member of the Permanent Forum and she is also a member of the UNDP CSO Advisory Committee to the Administrator.

1. Introduction

Chair, members of the Permanent Forum, indigenous peoples and your organizations, colleagues:

- UNDP is once again delighted to participate in this, the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
- I was here in 2002 at the historic opening of the session of the Forum and am very pleased to see the impact the Forum has had since then, where, not only has it become the principal body for dialogue between indigenous peoples, UN agencies and states and created a space for cooperation with the UN system, but it is also a platform and a catalyst for the UN to address challenging, complex and emerging issues. These include critical areas such as data collection and disaggregation, free, prior and informed consent vis-à-vis development and indigenous peoples, and now the MDGs.

2. MDGs and Indigenous Peoples

- I am therefore delighted to see that in this critical year in global efforts to achieve the MDGs as world leaders prepare to meet at September's summit at the General Assembly to review implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, the goals are taking centre stage at this year's Forum on Indigenous Issues.
- Given the scale of the challenge we face in meeting the goal to halve the number of people living on less than a dollar a day by 2015 and ultimately eradicate the extreme poverty and hunger, it's clear that governments, civil society – including indigenous peoples – the private sector, international institutions and others need to work together more than ever before in the fight against global poverty.
- Today, it is widely recognized that indigenous peoples hold a special place in the world due to their unique position in their societies, their heritage, and their history. With some estimates placing their number at over 200 million and living in more than seventy countries, indigenous peoples, whether majorities or minorities in countries, have, however, historically been the most disadvantaged, marginalized and excluded populations in many parts of the world.

- As UNDP's 2004 Human Development Report, *Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World*, made clear, if the world is to achieve the MDGs it needs to successfully confront the challenge of how to build inclusive, culturally diverse societies, not just because doing so successfully is a precondition for countries to focus properly on other priorities of economic growth, health and education for all citizens, but because allowing people full cultural expression is an important development end in itself.
- Because as UNDP has long argued, human development is first and foremost about allowing people to lead the kind of life they choose- and providing them with the tools and opportunities to make those choices.
- Given that indigenous peoples' identities, cultures, lands, and resources are uniquely intertwined and especially vulnerable to changes caused by development, involving indigenous peoples and your organizations is critical for reducing poverty, preventing and resolving conflict, enhancing democratic governance, and sustainably managing the environment and livelihood security.
- The knowledge, technologies and approaches being implemented by indigenous peoples is critical to achieving the MDGs. It is this knowledge that the global community needs to understand, value and support much more.
- And while development advice, advocacy, grant support to developing countries and strategic partnerships with critical constituencies is at the heart of the development process -- and UNDP has made real progress in a number of areas and with a range of constituencies -- we recognize that indigenous peoples and indigenous concerns are still too often absent from much of the work being undertaken on the MDGs at all levels.
- For example, the issue of national MDG reports rarely include indigenous peoples' organizations in the consultation process, indigenous issues and/or address indigenous peoples in its data collection exercises. As we are all too aware, the need for data collection and disaggregation on indigenous peoples is critical because, averages can mask inequalities.
- However, several regional and national Human Development Reports have included data disaggregated by ethnic groupings, language groupings, gender, geography, and age -- **a practice that needs to be done more rigorously and consistently.**

- Involving indigenous peoples in campaigning for the MDGs is also critical to their achievement. The Millennium Campaign, which aims to mobilize countries in the North and South around achieving the MDGs, has been working on working with civil society organizations worldwide. But here too, greater engagement with indigenous peoples is critical.
- So, we in the UN system have to do a better job of understanding indigenous peoples' issues so that we can better work with you to achieve the MDGs.

Appeal to the Permanent Forum

- In the next two weeks the forum will debate these issues. Today, I want to make a plea for your assistance on the following areas:
 1. How can indigenous peoples' issues and indicators be better integrated into the MDGs?
 2. How can indigenous peoples better engage with the Millennium Campaign? And,
 3. How can we create better channels of information flow and ensure greater participation in the MDG monitoring process?
- We hope that we will receive from the Forum a plan of action that is doable with concrete recommendations for the UN which we can move forward. I will ensure that our country offices receive these recommendations and that indigenous peoples become an integral part of our engagement with civil society issues at the country level.
- I also would urge Member States to ensure that the concerns of indigenous peoples are included in efforts to achieve the MDGs, and in development efforts more generally, and to make special efforts to include the situation of indigenous peoples in reporting on the implementation of the goals.
- Member States, international organizations and NGOs can promote national dialogues to bring together indigenous peoples' perspectives and priorities for human development and to discuss their expectations and perspectives regarding the MDGs.

3. UNDP and the Permanent Forum

- Last October, UNDP convened a meeting where a substantive debate on the opportunities and challenges vis-à-vis MDGs and indigenous peoples was initiated. A statement on behalf of the IASG and a technical position on the MDGs and indigenous peoples emerged from that meeting highlighting key recommendations to the UN system on how to integrate indigenous peoples in the implementation of the MDGs.
- For UNDP, our support and commitment to take forward the annual recommendations are anchored in our policy of engagement with indigenous peoples issued in 2001. As many of you will be aware, the objective of the policy note is to provide UNDP staff with a framework to guide their work in building sustainable partnerships with indigenous peoples.
- Rooted in the goals and targets set by world leaders at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, it is underpinned by the international human rights framework and a full recognition of indigenous peoples' vital role in, and contribution to, development.
- UNDP also seeks to balance its work on policy making with programme development and promoting action on the ground.
- A key example is the Human Rights Strengthening Programme, known as HURIST, is a joint programme with UNDP and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The indigenous peoples' component of HURIST aims to create a mechanism for dialogue in countries to ensure the participation of indigenous peoples in UNDP policies and programmes.
- In Kenya in 2004, HURIST established an advisory mechanism on indigenous issues known as the United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee of Kenya or UNIPACK. **Based on the successes of the HURIST programme, the government of Catalonia in Spain has committed funding for three more pilots in Latin America.**
- And the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme has been working to facilitate indigenous peoples' access to grants by exploring innovative grant making proposals in the form of videos for example. This year the GEF Small Grants Programme seeks to develop an *indigenous support network* to disseminate awareness and monitor progress on GEF Small Grants Programme grant access for indigenous peoples.

- UNDP is also currently implementing a \$2 million **Regional Initiative on Strengthening Policy Dialogue on Indigenous, Highland and Tribal Peoples' Rights and Development (RIPP)** in Southeast Asia. The project aims to build capacity, strengthen information networks, and support indigenous peoples' full and effective participation in policy dialogue at all levels. A key intended output will be an Asian Regional Human Development Report on indigenous peoples.
- For UNDP, our 2004 HDR "*Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World*" with its focus on building inclusive societies and managing diversity has provided a platform for debate on issues of concern to indigenous peoples. National Human Development Reports such as Bolivia's in 2004 specifically addresses issues of identities, multiculturalism, democratic pluralism and nation building.

Conclusion

- Finally, while not minimizing the challenges, I would urge that we build on the increased awareness, dialogue and successful experiences from our growing collaboration to ensure that indigenous peoples are both a partner and a beneficiary of the MDGs and that what we say here at headquarters get translated into action at the national and local levels.
- **UNDP will be a key partner in the Community Commons, a global community conference to take place on 16-18 June at Fordham University, New York, The space will highlight local level best practices that are already delivering the MDGs. Over 200 civil society representatives, including indigenous peoples, will convene to inform the Millennium Review Summit on the key role of communities in shaping and delivering the MDGs. We invite you to join and partner with us for this crucial event.**
- Once again, I thank you all for your participation and continued commitment to this critical issue.

Thank you.