



**STATEMENT**  
BY THE  
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The discussions on the World Conference on Indigenous People's

Mr. Chairman

The Government of Guyana is cognizant of the approaching world conference of indigenous peoples September 2014, and recognise the effort of Member states which have committed support for the preparatory work towards the world conference and we expectantly looking forward to the event.

We consider the world conference an ample opportunity to critically examine indigenous rights issues and development, providing strategies in a consolidated outcome document for strengthening the collective approach for adequately address the issues affecting indigenous peoples worldwide.

Listening to the many issues presented over the many sessions last week and today, the one issue that continues to stand out is the issue of collective land tenure security for indigenous peoples. I have noted the references to climate change and the environment including sustainable development, and am hopeful for these issues to be further discussed at the world indigenous conference.

With respect to the brief presentation on indigenous participation in democracies and electoral processes; it is importance for indigenous people's participation at the political and decision making levels. Indigenous people's political participation

offers a formidable opportunity to have direct interventions at the parliamentary level to reinforce positions on national issues and legislations.

Guyana's experience records significant indigenous people's involvement and participation in politics, nation building, and supporting our growing democracy and are active in the electoral process both at the national and local level electoral machinery's.

Constitutional reform created access for geographical political representation this offers a link to the hinterland regions where indigenous peoples are mostly located. Across political party lines there is a total of six (6) indigenous Members of Parliament and while we work for gender balance the reality is there are five females and one male parliamentarian in the 10th Parliament of Guyana. At the Cabinet level two indigenous women holds important portfolio: the position of Foreign Affairs Minister and Amerindian Affairs Minister.

The results are the recognition and acceptance of the strong voice of the indigenous peoples on matters that are of concern to them and an approach of positive discrimination in their favor, however not at the expense of the diverse ethnic groups of Guyana.

Guyana experience with indigenous peoples participation in the formulation of the Amerindian Act will never be understated, and the strength of the indigenous peoples on governance and administration of their affairs by elected leaders are entrenched in the legislation.

The Reform of Guyana's constitutions engaged widely, and received submissions from many indigenous leaders, and indigenous advocacy groups. Such experiences as noted are not yet wide spread and fully practises around the world and should be encouraged.

**The lesson:** Many examples of best practice are available in Guyana: notably is the indigenous peoples of Guyana continue to engage the Government of Guyana, this partnership offers consistent engaged dialogue. Indigenous groups and peoples should never underestimate the power of engaged dialogue with stakeholders including with Governments;

Guyana model offers a formal and direct line to the Head of State for all Amerindian leaders and the Cadirectin lauding through Ministerial outreaches. The hub of facilitation is made possible with the establishment of the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, which continue to offer representation and facilitation for all related indigenous issues.

It is to this end that Indigenous participation at the political and electoral levels remains essential as it offers a platform and mechanisms to increase capacities, capabilities and empowerment skills to better represent the people and their cause.

Achieving greater interventions that ensure the integration of safe guards to reinforce indigenous development into national policies at the legal, economic, social and cultural levels.

Major national development projects have been opened for national scrutiny and consultations with indigenous peoples. Indigenous people continues to make valuable contributions to Guyana Low Carbon Development Strategy, the Amalia Falls Hydro project, the proposed upgrading of the highway linking Guyana with our neighbor Brazil among others.

The high level of participation of indigenous people representatives is very prominent due to the willingness of the government and the foresight of the indigenous peoples who have to grapple with the development challenges, facing both the government and the indigenous leaders in a country of diversity and with a past encumbered by colonial and undemocratic experiences.

Mr. Chair

Guyana holds the strong position that the world conference holds many opportunities to discuss with greater zeal specific issues that are affecting indigenous people's around the world. Guyana stand only too willing to provide moral support to all indigenous peoples and as a country we uphold with great regard the priorities of the indigenous people of Guyana and with the spirit of cooperation we encourage Member States to continue to work in partnership to bring further resolution as is relevant. Guyana looks forward for a successful world conference on indigenous peoples.

I thank you.