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**INTERNATIONAL WORK GROUP FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

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**UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues,  
Eighteenth Session  
New York, 22 April – 3 May 2017**

Agenda Item 14: Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues considered by the Economic and Social Council and emerging issues.  
Tuesday 23 April 2019

Jointly submitted by: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and IMPACT -Kenya y Gobierno Territorial Autónomo de la Nación Wampi (Peru)

Thank you, Mr./Madam Chair,

As this is the first time we take the floor, allow us to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of this session.

Following Jens Dahl's presentation on the International Seminar on Indigenous Peoples Rights to autonomy and self-government, which was held in Mexico City from the 11th to the 13th of March, we will focus our statement on a few key issues that were considered during the seminar and convey four recommendations for the consideration of the Permanent Forum regarding its future work.

But first allow me to express our sincere appreciation over the collaboration and contribution of the UN Permanent Forum as well as of the SR, EMRIP and the IACHR for their active engagement and collaboration as co-organizers. We very much hope that this unique collaboration can continue in the future.

Mr/Madam Chair:

There was consensus that the fundamental elements of indigenous autonomy must be defined by indigenous peoples themselves. These elements require the effective exercise of power by indigenous peoples to govern themselves, and are manifested, among others, by economic, social and cultural self-determination, in accordance with indigenous peoples' own customs, visions and aspirations. Control over land and natural resources was considered the corner stone element.

While some of the experiences which were presented are indeed good practices on the exercise of autonomy and self-government, there were many others which demonstrated that they are still plagued with great obstacles including criminalization and violent attacks especially against those indigenous peoples who claim autonomy and self-government.



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During the seminar indigenous peoples from several countries as well as the UNSR and the IACHPR reported on a new and very worrisome trend, namely the regression experienced in the implementation of indigenous peoples' rights in many countries of the World. Many of the positive developments and advances achieved through legislative and administrative measures, as well as public policies are currently being reversed in many countries.

Indigenous peoples attending the Seminar recommended that the international human rights system take a more active role and closely monitor the implementation of the international instruments that recognize the right to autonomy and self-government of indigenous peoples. In this regard, indigenous peoples also recommended the establishment of an international network of indigenous peoples to work in coordination with international human rights mechanisms on matters related to the operationalization of this right.

Mr/Madam Chair

Our recommendations to the UN Permanent Forum regarding its future work are the following:

- To give special attention to the topic of the implementation of IP's right to autonomy and self-government at its 19th session.
- To scale up its efforts to increase knowledge and understanding among UN Agencies and Funds on indigenous peoples right to self-determination and self-government.
- To actively promote, in cooperation with the UNSR and EMRIP, the adoption of necessary measures to avoid regressions in international law in matters of recognition of indigenous peoples rights, including their right to autonomy and self-government.
- To give special attention to monitor the process of implementation ILO Convention 169.

Mr/Madam Chair, I will conclude our statement by quoting one of the indigenous representatives from Mexico who attended the seminar "The right to autonomy of indigenous peoples is no donation - autonomy isn't ever given - autonomy is obtained through indigenous peoples own perseverance in the fight to obtain it".