



**SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL STATEMENT TO THE
16TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON
INDIGENOUS ISSUES (UNPFII),
DELIVERED BY THE
DEPUTY MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND
TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, MR OBED BAPELA
24 APRIL 2017,
NEW YORK**

Agenda Item 8: "Tenth Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on
the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: measures taken to implement the
Declaration"

Check against delivery

Madame Chairperson,

My delegation joins all the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election for the 16th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. We are convinced that your leadership and stewardship of this Session will impact positively on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in making a change in their quality of life.

We applaud the High Level ceremonial opening of this morning signifying the importance of 2017 as the year of celebration for the tenth anniversary since the adoption of the Declaration.

The tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration should not only be a rhetorical celebration, but should translate into concrete actions at all levels in order to give true meaning to the notion of "leaving no one behind".

South Africa wishes to support and reiterate your words of this morning that Indigenous Human Rights defenders require protection in particular from corporate abuse.

Madame Chair,

There are significant achievements registered by our Government in the last ten years and these will be shared in more details tomorrow in the plenary of the General Assembly, key among them being the introduction of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Bill which seeks to recognize the Khoi-San or indigenous leaders, structures and communities.

The South African Government has adopted an inclusive approach ensuring that no communities or people are deliberately excluded from

the benefits that their country has to offer. States should adopt programmes to seriously address the challenges of poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion, economic disparities, instability and insecurity.

In our humble view, the time is now to seriously reflect on the questions of elaborating a Convention on the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

I thank you