

Mr. President,

The international community has long acknowledged that the distinct cultures and languages of indigenous peoples form part of the cultural heritage of humankind and deserve protection.

Throughout the world, indigenous peoples continue to suffer disproportionately in numerous areas of their daily lives. This include increasingly being denied access to their traditional lands and resources, use of their native languages; access to adequate health care, education, food, shelter, and economic development.

States should do more towards fulfilling their obligations to promote, protect and respect human rights for all, including the rights of indigenous peoples. More than one decade of discussions in the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and in other human rights bodies indicate that, still few countries are not prepared to recognize the fact that indigenous peoples are entitled to all human rights including the right to own their land within the country in which they live.

It is our sincere hope that the adoption of the current draft of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the Human Rights Council would open new grounds upon which the international community could build on the past experiences in order to better promote and protect the human rights of indigenous peoples.

The Draft Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples represents a positive development in the promotion and protection of the basic rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people. We believe that its adoption will imply that we may in fact be witnessing the dawn of a new era in the promotion and protection of human rights for all particularly the indigenous peoples.

Thank You