



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Statement by Wang Hao of the Chinese Delegation at
the Third Committee of the 69th Session of General Assembly
on Agenda Item: Rights of Indigenous Peoples
(October 20, New York)**

Madam Chair,

China welcomes the reports submitted by the Secretariat under this agenda item. With their splendid history and magnificent achievements, indigenous peoples have made unique contributions to the development of human society. However, due to historical reasons, many of them remain marginalized in their societies. Their land has been taken away; their language and culture have come under attack; there is no guarantee for their basic rights; and they suffer from chronic poverty and various forms of discrimination.

Since the UN designated 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, a consensus has gradually taken shape on the need to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples. China

welcomes the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples convened by the UN in September this year and appreciates the adoption of the Outcome Document. I wish to make the following observations in this connection:

Firstly, safeguarding indigenous peoples' rights to life and development is a pre-requisite for the realization of their other rights. As noted by the SG's report, indigenous areas remain among the poorest in the world. Priority attention should be given by the countries concerned to poverty reduction and economic development of the indigenous groups in order to effectively improve their access to employment, education, health and housing so as to help them lead a better life.

Secondly, countries concerned must demonstrate political will to implement effectively the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. The Outcome Document represents the consensus of all parties and what matters next is its implementation. We hope that the UN will strengthen its role in evaluation and supervision, urge countries concerned, especially developed countries concerned, to implement in earnest the Declaration and the Outcome Document so as to bring indigenous peoples into the mainstream of the society and better protect their basic rights and fundamental freedoms.

Thirdly, the concerns of indigenous peoples should be fully reflected in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. China is in favor of

taking into full account the rights, views and needs of indigenous peoples as we formulate this agenda. We call on the parties concerned to use the negotiations as an opportunity to undo the historical injustices suffered by indigenous peoples. At the same time, we must value the positive role that the unique cultural approaches of indigenous peoples can play in addressing climate change and achieving sustainable development.

Finally, it is important to have a solid grasp of the concept of indigenous people. The indigenous concept is a product of colonial history. Not all countries have indigenous people within their borders; and more importantly, a distinction must be made between native people and indigenous people. Mixing the two concepts will negatively affect the implementation of the Declaration and may harm the long term prospects of the cause of indigenous peoples.

China is ready to work with others to support the legitimate demands of indigenous peoples and contribute to the promotion and protection of the basic rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples.

Thank you, Madam Chair.