



**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**  
**MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**Statement by Counselor Shaojun Yao**  
**at the Third Committee of the 70th Session of the GA**  
**under the Item “Right of Indigenous Peoples”**

October 19, New York

Mr. Chairman,

Indigenous peoples are participants of and witness to the development of human society and are entitled to equal status and basic rights in the society. However, due to historical reasons, many indigenous groups have been subject to discrimination and oppression with their lands and wealth plundered, their languages and cultures assaulted, and equity and justice denied. In this 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the first year of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community should seize this opportunity to advance the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples. Having studied carefully the report submitted by the Secretary-General under this agenda item, China wishes to make the following observations on the issue of indigenous peoples.

First, there should be a correct and clear understanding of the concept of indigenous people. This concept is the product of western colonial history. Not all countries have indigenous peoples, and native residents are not the same as indigenous peoples. Confusing or distorting this concept is not in line with the spirit of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous

Peoples, nor is it conducive to the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of genuine indigenous peoples.

Secondly, goals related to indigenous peoples contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be actively implemented. Goal 2 and Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda have respectively referred to doubling the agricultural productivity and incomes of indigenous peoples and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for indigenous peoples. China calls on relevant countries, some developed countries in particular, to actively implement the above goals, thereby trying to rectify historical injustices inflicted upon indigenous peoples. At the same time, attention should be given to the important role of indigenous peoples themselves in the realization of the SDGs.

Thirdly, the participation of representatives and institutions of indigenous peoples in the affairs of the United Nations should be addressed appropriately. Considering ways to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in relevant UN meetings is an important task in the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. China attaches great importance to this issue. We have taken note of the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report, and we understand that some institutions of indigenous peoples have different views regarding relevant proposals. We hope that all the parties continue to engage in consultations and gradually reach a settlement acceptable to all, which can both increase the participation of *bona fide* representatives and institutions of indigenous peoples in UN affairs, and prevent some NGOs from disguising as "indigenous peoples" in the UN meetings.

Fourthly, the positive role of international investment and free trade in promoting the rights of indigenous people should be given full play. Relevant enterprises and national governments concerned should respect the legitimate rights and needs of indigenous peoples and engage in full consultations with the local indigenous groups in order to ensure their prior informed consent. Governments need to improve institutional arrangements to enable indigenous groups to enjoy their fair share of economic dividends

from international investment and free trade, and help to improve their employment, education, health, housing, etc.

China is ready to work with others to support the just claims of indigenous peoples and contribute to the protection and promotion of their fundamental freedoms and rights.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.