

UNITED NATIONS



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STATEMENT TO THE THIRD COMMITTEE

New York, 19 October 2015

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here with you today to present the Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in implementing the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

The World Conference was held in September 2014 with the purpose of sharing perspectives on and best practices for the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, as well as pursuing the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was adopted in the General Assembly in 2007.

In the outcome document of the World Conference, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on progress made in the implementation of key provisions. The Secretary-General's report was based on compiled information received from Member States and indigenous peoples' organizations and representatives, through written questionnaires and face to face consultations.

Against this backdrop, I would like to summarize some key messages from the four specific areas upon which the Secretary-General was requested to report.

First, there was a request for the Secretary-General to provide an overview of steps taken in the implementation of the outcome document. The report takes note of the fact that, since the World Conference last year, there have been few specific actions taken by Member States in the direct follow-up to the outcome document. This is possibly due to the short timeframe that has passed.

The few specific follow up actions taken to date indicate a need to further disseminate the outcome document and to raise awareness of the World Conference and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Member States, the United Nations system and indigenous peoples themselves all have roles to play in this regard.

Secondly, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to develop a system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the UN Declaration and to report on progress made. In accordance with the mandate set out in the outcome document, the aim is to facilitate, within existing resources, a coherent system-wide approach to supporting Member States in achieving the ends of the UN Declaration.

In October 2014, the Secretary-General appointed the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Wu Hongbo, with the responsibility for coordinating the action plan. Following consultations with Member States, indigenous peoples and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, the draft action plan has been prepared. It focuses on strengthening implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the UN headquarters and country levels, including through awareness-raising and capacity building. The plan will be shared with the Chief Executive Board in the coming weeks.

Third, the Secretary-General was requested to provide recommendations on how to use, modify and improve existing UN mechanism to achieve the ends of the UN Declaration. The report focuses on the Expert Mechanisms on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as the outcome document made specific mention of that mechanism.

The report notes that the work of the Expert Mechanism providing thematic expertise to the Human Rights Council has been valuable. However, it is necessary to strengthen the impact of the work of the Expert Mechanism.

The Human Rights Council is currently reviewing this issue. It has recently requested that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights convene an expert workshop on the review of the mandate of the Expert Mechanism, no later than the first quarter of 2016, and prepare a report on that workshop¹.

Fourth and finally, the General Assembly asked the Secretary-General to make specific proposals to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions at the United Nations.

The Secretary-General encourages Member States to move forward on developing measures to enable the effective participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them, through representatives chosen in accordance with their own procedures.

As a next step, the Secretary-General' report recommends that the President of the General Assembly may wish to consider appointing co-

¹ A/HRC/30/L9 (28 September 2015) as adopted.

facilitators or advisers, including indigenous representatives, to lead an open-ended consultation process. This consultation process could involve Member States, indigenous peoples' representatives and existing UN mechanisms to discuss the possible procedural and institutional steps and selection criteria necessary to enable indigenous peoples' participation.

Thank you.