

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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CLOSING REMARKS TO UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

New York, May 20 2016

**Mr. Chair,
Distinguished Members of the Permanent Forum and
Representatives of Indigenous Peoples,
Excellencies,
Dear Representatives of the UN system, Representatives of
other inter-governmental organizations and of Civil Society,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**It is a pleasure to be here at this Closing of the fifteenth
Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues.**

**Indigenous peoples' rights and issues have been close
to my heart throughout my term as the United Nations
Secretary-General.**

**Throughout my term, I have had the pleasure of
participating at many sessions of the Permanent Forum. I
have furthermore had the privilege of visiting several
indigenous peoples' communities and hearing about your
historical struggles, your contributions to Mother Earth and
humanity, your sustainable ways of living, your cultural
expressions as well as the endangered situation of your
languages. I have also heard and understood your calls for
recognition and respect for your identities and rights as
indigenous peoples. I am with you in this fight.**

Throughout the years, important achievements have been made at the United Nations. A historical step was the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in September 2007. Another was the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014. Both of these milestones were due to the close partnerships of indigenous peoples and Member States. In addition, important international instruments for indigenous peoples have been adopted as the Convention No. 107 and 169 of the International Labour Organization.

As a result of the 2014 World Conference, now we have a System-wide action plan on Indigenous Peoples to achieve the ends of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is an important tool in your advocacy and partnership with the United Nations at the country level.

Due to your efforts, Indigenous peoples are firmly on the United Nations' Agenda. The strong participation and visibility of indigenous peoples at the recent Climate Change and 2030 Agenda negotiations – and the reference to indigenous priorities in the final texts of these multilateral negotiations - clearly show how the world is listening and

appreciating the contributions of indigenous peoples to our global Agendas.

In our new transformational 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development it is crucial that indigenous peoples across the world participate and contribute to the implementation and follow-up. Furthermore, it is essential that States are kept accountable to implement the 2030 Agenda with full respect of the rights and minimum standards guaranteed for indigenous peoples in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

While much has been achieved, we also have much more to do. We cannot be complacent. For instance, conflicts on the lands and territories of indigenous peoples and the lack of inclusion of indigenous peoples' voices in peace processes remain a challenge.

I call on all Member States, on indigenous peoples and on the entire UN system to address these serious concerns. A good start is to bring this Session's deliberations into the review processes related to the United Nations' peace and security work.

Another important process is the consultation of the President of the General Assembly on ways to increase participation of indigenous peoples in relevant United Nations bodies. I would urge you all to be engaged to ensure that your voices are there at the decision-making level.

Let me express my heartfelt thanks to all of you for your dedication, your inspiration, your openness and your generosity throughout these years. I am very touched to be here today. You can count on the United Nations to continue the work of integrating the rights of indigenous peoples into international human rights and development agendas, as well as policies and programmes at all levels to ensure that the vision behind the UN Declaration becomes a reality.

Thank you