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**Message from Mr. Alvaro Pop,  
Chairperson of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues,  
on the occasion of the adoption of the  
American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

**25 July 2016**

The adoption of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples during the fortieth General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, was a historic event.

The American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognises the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples, as well as their right to self-determination; their territories, lands and resources; peace, security and protection; development; spirituality; and the preservation of indigenous cultures in the Americas. The Declaration further recognises the right of indigenous women and peoples in voluntary isolation or initial contact. It also states that the rights recognised in this Declaration, and in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of indigenous peoples of the Americas.

This Declaration is the result of a 17 year dialogue between States and Indigenous Peoples. However, without implementation of the Declaration, we will not be able to achieve full respect for the rights of indigenous peoples.

I therefore call upon governments to advance the adaptation and harmonisation of public national laws and policies to include full participation of indigenous peoples. The establishment of roundtables for dialogue between indigenous peoples and governments would be clear signals to promote, respect and fulfill the commitments made in this Declaration, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Convention No. 169 of the International Labour Organization, and other human rights instruments.

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is a significant platform for States and indigenous peoples of the Americas to highlight the progress and challenges in this journey towards the full implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples. The legal framework exists, now it is up to the political will of States to fulfill these commitments.