



STATEMENT BY

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**ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)**

ON

AGENDA ITEM 66: Indigenous Issues

**IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE
OF THE 64TH SESSION OF THE UNGA**

**NEW YORK
THURSDAY, 19 OCTOBER, 2009**

Please allow me, on behalf of the CARICOM, to extend to you and other members of the Bureau our warmest congratulations on your election as a Chair of the Third Committee. We are confident that your stewardship of our deliberation will guarantee the success of the work of the Third Committee during this 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

CARICOM Member States are strong supporters of Indigenous peoples right to participate not only in the in the United Nations process but also in their right to have international laws and standards applied to them in an equal and just manner. To this end we thank the Secretary-General for his report on the status of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations and the report of the Special Rapporteur on the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

We applaud the work of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues working to ensure that there is continuous productive Interaction between indigenous peoples and the wider international community. CARICOM supports the Permanent Forum and its evaluation exercise for the production of a mid-term assessment report to the General Assembly to be given at its 65th session and calls on all Member States, UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations along with indigenous peoples' organizations and other nongovernmental organizations to identify progress they have made towards the successful implementation of the goal and objectives of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples and facilitating the process of documentation by submitting their information on step towards enabling mainstreaming Indigenous perspectives in development.

The CARICOM Member States have made important progress in the implementation of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which all

of our member states supported. We continue to insure that our indigenous populations are equal partners in all our developmental efforts by ensuring that they have equal representation in governance and decision making in their material and cultural life nationally, regionally and globally. We acknowledge the many contributions that indigenous peoples have and continue to make to the prosperity of our nations including through the sharing of traditional knowledge in areas such as the promotion of biodiversity, crop productivity, sustainable land use and conservation.

It is imperative that indigenous peoples are secure in their human rights are allowed the freedom to determine their level of interaction and participation in the material and cultural life of the societies of which they are a part and of which impact upon them.

But, despite the fact that our nations have come a long way in the mainstreaming of Indigenous perspectives in our development policies, the devastating effects that the global economic crisis has had on our economies are placing the attainment of these policies and of the Millennium Development Goals further away from our grasp. Indigenous populations constitute about one third of the world's poorest and most marginalized peoples. Failure to achieve the MDGs would disproportionately affect the most vulnerable populations, amongst which we count our indigenous populations. We cannot overemphasize the critical link between development and human rights in this regard. Indeed, the Second International Decade fittingly coincides with the MDG deadline. We thus urge continued support for the Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues. Even in the face of the current challenges that beset us, CARICOM Member States have made contributions to the Fund.

Mr./ Madame Chair

The relationship between indigenous peoples and the United Nations and the International Community needs to be fostered and encouraged to allow for the perpetuation of changes in the priorities, approaches and frameworks

International development agencies and funds in the way they interact with indigenous peoples. There is need for clarification and continued education on the various United Nations mechanisms addressing indigenous peoples allowing for their active and continued participation and engagement in the work of the United Nations in general and the work of the three mechanisms namely the Special Rapporteur, the expert mechanism and the permanent Forum specifically. There is also the continued need for genuine partnerships between the UN, governments, international organizations, civil society groups, private businesses and, indigenous peoples, for the promotion of development, human rights and peace.

Mr./Madame Chair,

Indigenous women and girls still suffer from multiple forms of discrimination, both and in particular discrimination based on their gender and ethnicity. They are usually the sections of the populations most subjected to extreme poverty, trafficking, illiteracy, lack of access to lands, non-existent or poor health care and to violence in the private and the public sphere. We need to increase our efforts to enhance awareness of the global situation of indigenous women and girls while working on developing their capabilities to promote social transformation, rural and economic development, and peace.

Our governments have taken the initiative to ensure that our law making and public administration institutions continue to ensure that general human rights are extended to our indigenous peoples eliminating obstacles which would prevent their full enjoyment of Human Rights. We continue to build on the advances we have made in the protection of Indigenous rights through consultations with civil society, through the education of society at large and through partnerships with Indigenous peoples. We have implemented policies aimed at bridging the implementation gap, among all relevant state actors and assisted in the implementation and perpetuation of institutions allowing for self government and management by Indigenous peoples of their internal and local affairs.

Mr./Madame Chair

Our governments look forward to continued cooperation with the Special Rapporteur, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples and the expert mechanism on the rights of indigenous peoples, and continue to call upon the specialized agencies of the United Nations system to assist us in our ongoing efforts through the mobilization of financial and technical assistance.

CARICOM countries are fully committed to the task of promoting and protecting the inherent rights of our indigenous peoples and will continue to work to ensure that we continue to build on global developments and especially the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous peoples in this effort.

I thank you for your attention.