

## Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Thank you for the opportunity to address this meeting and to raise key points on behalf of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The perspective of the Permanent Forum with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals relates to long standing concerns of indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples live in many of the remotest areas of the world. As a consequence they are frequently marginalized from basic service delivery, negatively affected by mega infrastructure projects – often running through their areas, discriminated against by the dominant sectors of society and lacking any political influence. Their territories are among the world's greatest biological diverse areas, where many of the remaining untapped natural resources are found.

Indigenous peoples have not only been left behind the benefits of development, but they have also suffered disproportionately from many of the negative elements of development, such as destruction of the habitats, forced displacement, loss of traditional livelihoods and human rights violations.

The Permanent Forum has consistently called for the effective participation of indigenous peoples in development processes that affect them and this includes the formulation and monitoring of development activities. The Forum has also emphasized the importance of disaggregating data based on ethnicity so we can better understand how different groups of people within a country enjoy the benefits .

In its twenty years, the Permanent Forum has taken its role as a subsidiary body of ECOSOC very seriously. To this end, we have made a number of recommendations related to the development priorities as defined by the Council, focusing on the earlier Millennium Development Goals, and the Sustainable Development Goals. We have also considered the priority themes of the Council in the annual reports of the Permanent Forum to the Council. Having said this, I believe that there are is room for improvement.

Firstly, the designation of priority themes by ECOSOC mid-year means that the priority themes of the Forum have already been chosen as our annual sessions take place in April/May. Although we have a standing agenda item on the 2030 Development Agenda/SDGs, it will be good to have our theme better aligned to that of the Council.

Formally, there is little interaction between the Permanent Forum and its parent body. The Forum was established by ECOSOC in 2000. Each year, the Forum meets for two weeks in New York and at that meeting, the sixteen members of the Forum prepare a report that is then submitted to the Council. The report contains recommendations, and three pro-forma draft decisions for the Council's consideration. The Council takes note of the report and adopts the three draft decisions. We are pleased that now the chair of the Forum has presented the report in person to the Council. This is a step forward in enhancing the interaction between the Council and the Forum. However, I believe that we all need to think more creatively about how the different subsidiary bodies of the Council can support and enrich each others' work and we need to think about how to do that in a more interactive manner.

As a governing body of many key UN entities and as the central UN coordinating body for development activities, the Economic and Social Council plays a key role in its oversight role and as such, there may be ways for the Council to further enhance cooperation and coordination of some of its subsidiary bodies.

From the perspective of the Permanent Forum I want to emphasize that we are ready to contribute more. One of the key mandates of the Permanent Forum is to promote the coordination of indigenous issues within the United Nations with the system wide action plan on the rights of indigenous peoples aimed at implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples a key element in this regard. We are available to provide concrete advice on how the development system can strengthen the rights of indigenous peoples as part of the principle of leaving no one behind.

This leads to the issue of inputs to the HLPF. The Forum has made several calls to have a formal role in the HLPF - in the form of a seat for the Chair at the session to make substantive interventions as well as to participate, where appropriate in panels. There is no clear path at the moment for Forum inputs beyond ad hoc participation in a side event. As the ECOSOC body mandated to discuss and advise on indigenous issues, I believe we can provide concrete substantive inputs on a range of issues that can help guide SDG achievement including peace and conflict (the theme for this years Forum session is SDG 16), climate change, bio-diversity, education and health, among others.

I look forward to hearing more on how we can better align and strengthen the work of the Council and its interaction with its subsidiary bodies.