

High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

First round of consultations organized by the President of the General Assembly

Tuesday 3 June 2014

Opening intervention

Delivered by: Mr Jebra Ram Muchahary and Ms Mehana Hind

Mr President, thank you for the opportunity to speak.

This statement is made on behalf of the indigenous caucuses from the following six regions: Africa, Arctic, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pacific, and Russia.

Given the short notice period for this first round of consultations many of our indigenous brothers and sisters were unable to attend, particularly those from regions where visas are required. We specifically note that the African region was unable to send delegates on such short notice; nevertheless they have joined consensus in delivering this intervention. We recommend that ample notice be given for future meetings so that there can be a broad range of indigenous peoples' participation in this process.

We are pleased that the consultations on the outcome document and the remaining organizational matters for the high level plenary session of the General Assembly to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples have now entered a new stage.

We welcome the appointment of Dr Mirna Cunningham and Mr Les Malezer as two of your four advisers for this process, and we look forward to working with you, Mr President, and your four advisers with the aim of securing a successful outcome for the high level plenary meeting.

Mr President, the modalities resolution requests you, in consultation with representatives of indigenous peoples and member states, to (1) finalize the remaining organizational arrangements for the high level plenary meeting, and (2) to prepare a draft outcome document. We stand ready to assist you in your efforts in this regard.

In relation to organizational matters, the modalities resolution requests the President of the General Assembly to finalize arrangements for the following matters, in consultation with member states and representatives of indigenous peoples:

1. The definition of the specific themes for the roundtables and the interactive panel discussion;
2. Designation of representatives of members states and indigenous peoples as co-chairs for the roundtables and the interactive panel discussion;

3. Designation of three representatives of indigenous peoples as speakers at the opening meeting; and
4. The possible inclusion of an opening ceremony involving indigenous peoples.

We stand ready to assist you in finalizing these organizational matters, including by proposing three indigenous peoples' representatives as speakers at the opening meeting, and four indigenous co-chairs for the roundtables and the panel discussion. We will carry out necessary consultations on these matters in and between our respective regions, and submit our proposals to you.

Mr President, with regard to the process of drafting the outcome document, the modalities resolution identifies three sources for input in your preparation of the outcome document:

1. Your consultations with states and indigenous peoples;
2. Views emerging from the preparatory process; and
3. Views emerging from the interactive hearings.

In this first round of consultations we will focus on action orientated themes and outcomes that so far have been prioritized in the preparatory process. In this regard, we draw your attention to General Assembly document A/67/994 also known as the Alta Outcome Document. The Alta Outcome Document reflects the global views and priorities of indigenous peoples and was specifically created in response to the high level plenary meeting. It is the product of preparatory processes in the seven geographical regions, thematic preparatory meetings organized by the women's caucus and the youth caucus, and a technical drafting group.

The Alta Outcome Document was adopted by consensus during the global preparatory conference held in Alta, Norway in June 2013 which was attended by over 600 indigenous delegates and observers. The Alta Outcome Document sets out four thematic themes as well as concrete recommendations that indigenous peoples expect will be reflected in the final outcome document of the high level plenary meeting.

Member states and organs of the UN have already recognized the importance of the Alta Outcome Document. In its resolution 24/L.22, the UN Human Rights Council recommends that the four themes identified in the Alta Outcome Document be taken into account when considering the specific themes for the roundtable and panel discussions at the high level plenary meeting. In its resolution 68/149, the 3rd Committee of the General Assembly endorses the Human Rights Council recommendation, but importantly also adds that the Alta Outcome Document, and other proposals made by indigenous peoples, be taken into account when preparing the outcome document of the high level plenary meeting. Finally, we would like to draw your attention to the Ministerial Declaration, adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China, on 26 September 2013. In operative paragraph 59 of the Ministerial Declaration of the Group of 77 and China, it is recommended that the Alta Outcome Document be taken into account when preparing the outcome document of the high level plenary meeting.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has praised the process by which the Alta outcome document was adopted stating that it is an important normative instrument and plan of action in its own right and that it has a high level of legitimacy as it reflects the expectations and aspirations of indigenous peoples globally.

The Alta outcome document is the most comprehensive and widely supported position on the high level plenary meeting. It provides decisive steps that could be included in the outcome document of the high level plenary meeting in order to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples and which will move discussion beyond aspiration to implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Alta Outcome Document clearly falls within one of the areas that must be taken into account when drafting the outcome document because it reflects the views emerging from the preparatory process and provides a firm basis upon which the outcome document of the high level plenary meeting can be drafted.

The four themes identified in the Alta Outcome Document are the following:

1. Indigenous Peoples' Lands, Territories, Resources, Oceans and Waters
2. UN System Action for the Implementation of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
3. Implementation of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
4. Indigenous Peoples' Priorities for Development with Free, Prior and Informed Consent

We will be pleased to provide further elaborations of the specific themes and recommendations contained in the Alta Outcome Document at an appropriate time during the course of your consultations.

We are confident that consensus between states and indigenous peoples will be achieved in relation to the content of the outcome document.

Thank you Mr President.