

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

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

Monday 18 August 2014

Opening intervention

Delivered by: John Henriksen for the Indigenous Global Coordinating Group (GCG)

Mr/Madam Chair,

Thank you for allowing the Indigenous Global Coordinating Group, often referred to as the GCG, the opportunity to make our initial comments to version 1 of the outcome document. These comments reflect the views of the indigenous regions of Africa, the Arctic, Asia, Latin-America and the Caribbean, the Pacific and Russia, as well as the global indigenous women's caucus.

We would like to acknowledge the work of the President of the General Assembly (PGA), and his team of advisers, in producing the latest draft outcome document, which also reflects many of the recommendations and proposals made by the GCG regions during, and after, the second round of consultations.

We also acknowledge the PGA's efforts to make the 1 version of the outcome document more focused and action oriented; it provides a good foundation for the third round of consultations.

Mr/Madam Chair,

We understand that you intend to move through version 1 of the outcome document paragraph by paragraph. In doing so, our regional indigenous peoples' representatives and the women's caucus representative will make specific proposals for changes to the relevant operative paragraphs, reflecting our joint positions, and highlighting caucus and regional priorities within the framework of our joint positions.

Hence, in our joint opening intervention, we will only identify our most prioritized paragraphs and recommendations. The GCG has identified 18 priority operative paragraphs, which we have divided into five clusters, which are as follows:

Cluster 1

Cluster 1 contains the following paragraphs related to UN system action for the implementation of the rights of Indigenous Peoples: OP 21, 25, 27 and 34. In addition, the Chapeaux is included in cluster 1.

Cluster 2

Cluster 2 contains the following paragraphs related to Indigenous Peoples' lands, territories and resources: OP 3, 16, 18 and 20. In addition to these four paragraphs, we will reintroduce language from the zero draft OP 24, in the form of OP16 *bis*.

Cluster 3

Cluster 3 contains the following paragraphs related to national level implementation of the rights of Indigenous Peoples: OP 6 and 8.

Cluster 4

Cluster 4 contains the following paragraphs related to data disaggregation, and indigenous women, youth, children and persons with disabilities: OP 10, 12, 15 and 26.

Cluster 5

Cluster 5 contains the following paragraphs related to the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development: OP 29, 30 and 31.

The following two operative paragraphs are GCG's highest prioritized paragraphs:

- OP 21 regarding the proposed oversight mechanism; and
- OP 27 regarding the status and participation of Indigenous Peoples within the United Nations system.

These two operative paragraphs must remain in the document, in slightly redrafted versions, which will be introduced by our regional representatives, when we discuss the relevant paragraphs.

OP 25 regarding the appointment of a high-level UN official is another paragraph which is very high on our list of priorities. We support OP 25 as currently drafted, and we encourage Member States to do likewise, as we believe that such a high-level official has an important role in promoting the implementation of Indigenous Peoples' rights.

Mr/Madam Chair,

The GCG also attaches great importance in ensuring that the principle of free, prior and informed consent is reflected in the outcome document. We note that OP 3, which is a new paragraph, intended to replace all previous references to the principle of free, prior and informed consent. The zero draft contained five operative paragraphs that referred to the principle of free, prior and informed consent. In the latest draft, all these references have been

deleted, and replaced by OP 3, which appears to be an omnibus paragraph on “free, prior and informed consent”. We don’t resist the inclusion of OP 3 in the document.

However, in our view, OP 3 is too limited in scope, as it only addresses “free, prior and informed consent” in relation to legislative and administrative measures. We believe it is of fundamental importance that the principle of free, prior and informed consent is also specifically reflected in provisions related to lands and territories, including situations where third parties seek access to indigenous territories. Therefore, our regional representatives will make concrete recommendations with regard to how the weaknesses of version 1 of the outcome document, in relation to this matter, can be resolved.

Mr/Madam Chair, we wish to reiterate our strong support for the annexing of the Alta Outcome Document to the outcome document of the high level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, as suggested in paragraph 2 of the chapeaux. This is a matter of priority for us. The Alta Outcome Document, as the consensus document of Indigenous Peoples’ in all seven indigenous regions, and the global caucuses of indigenous youth and women, deserves to be reflected as an annex. The annexing of the document does not amount to its endorsement by the General Assembly, but rather an acknowledgement, in good faith, of Indigenous Peoples’ contributions and active participation in the process.

Mr/Madam Chair,

As indicated earlier, the indigenous regional and caucus representatives of the GCG will elaborate further on our 18 prioritized paragraphs, and submit specific language changes where that is relevant. These proposals represent consensus positions by the six regions that cooperate within the framework of the GCG, as well as the Global Indigenous Women’s Caucus.

In conclusion, the GCG wishes to reiterate its commitment, in good faith, to work and contribute towards reaching consensus between Member States and Indigenous Peoples regarding the content of the outcome document. As many of you know, the GCG has permanent representation in New York, through our regional and caucus representatives, till the conclusion of this process. We stand ready to actively engage with Member States and the President of the General Assembly, and his team of advisers, throughout the process, including during the inter-governmental phase of the process.

Thank you.