

# THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

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## Press Release

### UN Member States reaffirm commitment to the rights of Indigenous Peoples at first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

*Historic meeting gathers over 1000 indigenous delegates, Heads of State and Government, UN officials and national human rights institutions to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of Indigenous Peoples*


New York, 22 September 2014 – Following the opening of the first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in New York, UN Member States adopted a landmark Outcome Document in which they renewed their commitment to the full realization of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Opening the World Conference, the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Sam Kutesa, welcomed the “active participation of Indigenous Peoples in its preparation, as well as the cooperation between Member States and Indigenous Peoples in the preparation of the Outcome document.”

In his remarks in the opening session, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon underscored that “Indigenous Peoples are central to our discourse of human rights and global development.” Noting that the Conference’s “deliberations and decisions will reverberate across the international community with concrete effects in the lives of indigenous people”, he stressed that their engagement would be critical in the global drive for a more sustainable future and pledged the full support of the United Nations to indigenous peoples.

Indeed, the United Nations works closely with Indigenous Peoples to advance their rights, in particular through the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Addressing the opening session of the Conference as a special guest, Nobel Peace Prize and indigenous rights activist Rigoberta Menchú expressed her deep concern with the persistent violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and urged Member States to



“apply national and international law, particularly the rights enshrined in [ILO] Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which establishes minimum standards for their survival, dignity, well-being and rights.”

While significant progress has been made since the adoption of the Declaration in 2007, Indigenous Peoples continue to face numerous obstacles to the full realization of their rights, with many of them struggling to remain on their lands and retain the right to their natural resources. While they make up about five per cent of the world’s population, they constitute 15 per cent of the world’s poor and about one third of the world’s 900 million extremely poor rural people.

In the concise and action oriented Outcome Document, prepared on the basis of inclusive and open consultations with Member States and Indigenous Peoples, Member States reiterated their support for the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. They further reaffirmed their commitment to consult and cooperate with Indigenous Peoples in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them. The document also calls to focus on the special needs of older people, persons with disabilities, women and youth in indigenous communities.

The Conference will include three round tables and a panel discussion with representatives of entities of the United Nations system, civil society organizations and national human rights institutions and will conclude on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September.

More information:

Follow the Conference live on [webtv.un.org](http://webtv.un.org) and on Twitter with #WCIP2014

[www.un.org/indigenous2014](http://www.un.org/indigenous2014)

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