

23 September 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Closing of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples**

**Your Excellencies,  
Deputy Secretary-General  
Distinguished Indigenous Elders and Leaders of Tribal Governments  
Representatives of Indigenous Peoples  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As we come to the closing session of this historic World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, I am heartened to note the critical successes of this conference, which would not have been possible without the inclusive way in which indigenous peoples of the world and Member States approached these discussions.

At the outset, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to all conference participants for their valuable contributions, including Heads of States and Governments, Member State delegations, indigenous elders, representatives of Tribal Governments and indigenous organizations, United Nations system representatives, and civil society. Without your active engagement and commitment to this endeavour, this Conference surely would not have yielded such positive results.

**Distinguished Colleagues,**

Yesterday's adoption by the General Assembly of the Outcome Document signified a new chapter in the on-going dialogue and engagement between Indigenous Peoples and Member States. It will serve as a guiding document going forward, building on the commitments the international community previously made in the foundation document, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

There have been many outcomes from UN Conferences, but this document is unique because of the inclusive way in which indigenous peoples and Member States turned their shared goals into a reality. Indigenous peoples insisted on such an inclusive process from the very beginning and thanks to our collective efforts, we successfully met this aspiration. It was this inclusive approach that has made this conference a success.

The Outcome Document represents a balance between what indigenous peoples sought as further commitments towards more effective realization of their rights and what Member States could agree upon. I am convinced that its action-oriented provisions, when implemented, will bring about sweeping changes for current and future generations of indigenous peoples.

The Outcome Document accords importance to national actions plans and its provisions for a system-wide action plan for greater coherence within the UN system. The Document also focuses on the rights of indigenous women and addresses the intractable problem of violence against women, which must be at the top of the agenda.

The Document also speaks eloquently to the challenges faced by indigenous youth, the difficulty in sustaining indigenous languages, the need to preserve traditional knowledge and the requirement to ensure sustainable livelihoods. All these issues form the core of the broad and integrated agenda which indigenous people have called for over the last two decades.

In the roundtable discussions, speakers stressed the vital importance of implementing the provisions of the Declaration. Let me further echo this call to action. Within the framework of the emerging development paradigm, Member States, the UN system, civil society, and the private sector must join in a collective endeavour to make a difference for indigenous peoples worldwide.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish to thank the four Advisers to the President who facilitated this conference. The unwavering commitment and determination shown by Ambassador Andrej Logar of Slovenia, Ambassador Marjon Kamara of Liberia, and the two indigenous Advisers, Mr. Les Malezer and Dr. Mirna Cunningham were exemplary.

As we conclude this conference here today, I urge each and every one of you to do your part to keep the momentum of our discussions moving forward in a positive and productive manner. The signing of the Outcome Document is a pivotal moment for our work and should stand as a beacon of our renewed commitment to ensuring the inclusion of indigenous issues in the future work of the United Nations.

I thank you for your kind attention.