



STATEMENT BY

BELIZE

Delivered by: Amb. Lois M. Young

**ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)**

ON

AGENDA ITEM 66: Rights of Indigenous Peoples

**IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE
OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UNGA**

**NEW YORK
MONDAY, 21ST OCTOBER, 2013**

Please allow me, on behalf of the CARICOM, to extend to you and other members of the Bureau our warmest congratulations on your election as a Chair of the Third Committee. We are confident that your stewardship of our deliberation will guarantee the success of the work of the Third Committee during this 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM Member States continue to be avid supporters of the Declaration on the Rights Indigenous peoples and the core principles it espouses of non-discrimination and cultural integrity inter alia. We accept and promote the Declaration as the articulation of the rights and standards which should be perpetuated for our Indigenous peoples in the same equal and just manner in which these rights and standards should be applied to all peoples. We thank the Secretary-General for his note and transmission of the final report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People and take this opportunity to express singular words of gratitude to the Special Rapporteur James Anaya, whose mandate expires on 30 April 2014, for his tireless work in the promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and his absolute commitment to the advancement of the rights of indigenous peoples around the world.

Mr. Chairman,

The Permanent Forum continues to work assiduously to ensure that the discussion on Indigenous issues in the areas of culture, the environment, economic and social development, education, health and human rights continue to be highlighted on the world's stage and allowing for continuous productive interaction between indigenous peoples and the wider international community. CARICOM supports the Permanent Forum and the review process in which it is currently engaged and look forward to the outcome of this review as well as the

evaluation of its working methods. We echo the call by Member States to UN agencies to continue to coordinate and collaborate across relevant bodies, mechanisms, institutions and processes to identify cross cutting issues, reduce duplication and stream line recommendations. Harmonization of these processes and mechanisms would go a long way towards the more effective mainstreaming of Indigenous perspectives within the various UN components and by extension in development agendas of States.

CARICOM Member States continue to work on their implementation of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We continue to develop and incorporate, nationally and regionally, laws and policies relating to Indigenous Peoples. We have also sought and received technical assistance in developing legislation and protocols regarding the protection and promulgation of the rights of Indigenous peoples. Additionally, we recognize that political will is necessary to ensure that our Indigenous populations are well integrated into our societies, thus making the objectives of the Declaration a reality in the everyday lives of our Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge the many contributions made by our indigenous and tribal peoples, as appropriate, through the sharing of their traditional knowledge and the rich legacy the promotion of their cultural identity has brought to our nations. It is imperative that indigenous peoples are able to fully enjoy their human rights and are consulted and supported by governments in matters which impact upon them.

Mr. Chairman,

Indigenous populations constitute about one third of the world's poorest and most marginalized peoples and within this grouping the situation of Indigenous women and girls is even more acute as they face multiple forms of discrimination, in particular discrimination based on their gender and ethnicity. They are usually the sections of the populations most subjected to extreme poverty, trafficking, illiteracy, lack of access to lands, non-existent or poor health care and to violence in the private and the public sphere. As such it is imperative that at this period as

we assessing our shortfalls in the achievement of the MDG's and embarking on defining the Post 2015 Development Agendas, we ensure that we continue to address the historical and systemic divide experienced by our Indigenous populations and that issues which affect them are fully considered in this text.

CARICOM reaffirms it's commitment to the development of our Indigenous populations with "culture and identity" and to guaranteeing their fundamental rights and freedoms without discrimination in accordance with our respective Constitutions. We also look forward with anticipation to the upcoming World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, to be held in September 2014 as it will afford Member States the unique opportunity to work with the Indigenous peoples of the world to develop new measures allowing for their continuous and direct interaction in the processes of the United Nations as well as to ensure the actualization and incorporation of the rights of indigenous peoples at national and local levels.

Mr. Chair

CARICOM reiterates its call for and supports all appeals for the provision of additional funding and voluntary contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations which would afford indigenous peoples the opportunity to participate in the sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Human Rights Council. These opportunities guarantee Indigenous representatives a voice at the UN, which is critical to ensure they are included in discussions on issues which affect them. We also support the call for funding for the Trust Fund for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People's, established to promote, support and implement the objectives of the Decade. It is noteworthy that this Fund has, to date provided grants to over 125 projects in the areas of inter alia, culture, education, health and human rights.

However, it is unfortunate that due to limited resources most of the project proposals submitted for funding have had to have been denied.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM countries remain fully committed to the task of promoting and protecting the inherent rights of our indigenous peoples and will continue to work to remedy the systemic and historic violation perpetrated on indigenous peoples, including through building on global developments and through the promulgation and incorporation the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous peoples into programmes and policies.

I thank you for your attention.