



**STATEMENT BY**

**Delivered by:**

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

**ON**

***AGENDA ITEM 69: Indigenous Issues***

**IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE  
OF THE 70<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNGA**

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**MONDAY, 19 OCTOBER, 2015**

Mr. Chairman,

It is a privilege for me to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on this agenda item. Please allow me, on behalf of CARICOM, to extend to you and other members of the Bureau our warmest congratulations on your election to steer this Committee during this 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Ecuador speaking on behalf of CELAC.

We also thank the Secretary General for his report addressing and evaluating the progress made in the implementation of the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples on the impact of international investment and free trade on the human rights of indigenous peoples.

Mr. Chairman,

As Member States of the Caribbean region continue to make strides in addressing the issues of our Indigenous peoples in our national development plans, we have also continued our commitment to the inclusion of our Indigenous populations at all levels of decision making, particularly in decisions which directly or indirectly affect their lifestyles and cultural integrity. We stand unwavering in our commitment to the development of our Indigenous populations with “culture and identity” and to ensuring that fundamental rights and freedoms without discrimination is guaranteed to all our peoples as promulgated in our respective Constitutions.

In this regard it is worth noting that the Charter of Civil Society for the Caribbean Community underscores the contribution of the indigenous peoples to the development process and undertakes to continue to protect their historical rights and respect their culture and way of life.

Mr. Chairman,

The adoption by world leaders of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its pledge that no one will be left behind, is crucial in our efforts to ensure that issues that affect our indigenous peoples are adequately addressed. We cannot but underscore the importance of reducing inequalities, fostering social inclusion and combating violence and discrimination as important principles as we seek to implement the new agenda. This is particularly relevant for indigenous peoples who are among the

marginalized groups in many societies. We are pleased to note that the 2030 Agenda acknowledges that people who are vulnerable should be empowered and, in this regard, has included indigenous peoples as those whose needs are reflected in the Agenda.

In the Outcome document of the World Conference, it was agreed that Member States would consider, at the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly, ways to enable the participation of indigenous peoples representatives' and institutions in meetings of relevant UN bodies on matters affecting them. We have taken note of the inclusion in the report of the Special Rapporteur of several good practices that have been identified by Member States and indigenous peoples in this regard.

CARICOM is also of the view that meaningful dialogue between Member States and Indigenous Peoples should be fostered so that matters that affect indigenous peoples can be adequately addressed. It is in this spirit that CARICOM welcomes the Secretary-General's appointment of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs as the senior official within the United Nations system to coordinate actions in follow-up to the outcome document.

Mr. Chairman,

As we celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations and reflect on this year's theme "the road ahead to peace, security and human rights" we must realize that on the road ahead, the challenges we face will require our continued commitment to the development of our human resources by providing all our peoples with opportunities through the continued development of policies based on equity, inclusion and accountability.

As small island developing and low lying coastal states facing the accelerated phenomenon of climate change, the rising and warming of the oceans and seas, the spawning of super typhoons, hurricanes, tornadoes and floods, droughts, and desertification we would be remiss to ignore the traditional knowledge employed by our Indigenous people as they continue to live in harmony with nature.

In the outcome document adopted by the International SIDS Conference, also known as the "SAMOA Pathway", Member States committed to engaging a broad range of stakeholders at the global, regional, sub-regional, national and local levels for effective action on all aspects of climate change. Indigenous Peoples, in that regard, were identified as one of the important agents.

The recently concluded Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 also identified indigenous peoples as stakeholders in disaster risk reduction, and highlights that indigenous peoples through their experience and traditional knowledge, provide an

important contribution to the development and implementation of plans and mechanisms, including for early warning.

Their simple and harmonious approach to ecosystem management through the use of traditional sustainable agricultural practices, sustainable land use and conservation are some of the areas for cooperation that were identified by our governments. We take this opportunity to highlight and congratulate the Mayan Leaders Alliance of Belize and the South Central Peoples Development Association from Guyana, for their work in advancing sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities. In recognition of their excellent work, these two indigenous organizations have been awarded the Equator Prize for 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

As we continue the integration of Indigenous perspectives in our development policies and programmes ensuring that all our peoples are afforded the equality guaranteed by our constitutions, we acknowledge that more needs to be done. In our region, however, all our peoples including our Indigenous and tribal peoples are able pursue without fear of victimization, legal action where required for the resolution of matters directly or indirectly affecting their lifestyles.

CARICOM countries will continue to persist in our commitment to ensuring the promotion and protection of our Indigenous and Tribal peoples through the implementation of legal, policy and operational frameworks. We will also continue to build on developments regionally and globally with the continued support of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

I thank you for your attention.