



UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its 12th Session, 2012

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Statement delivered by:

**Ms. Laetitia Zobel, Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch, Division of Regional Cooperation,
Nairobi**

United Nations Environment Programme

Mr. Chair, Members of the Forum, dear Secretariat, colleagues and friends, distinguished Delegates.

UNEP would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair for your election and I would like to thank you for the support that you have provided to UNEP and its work in many ways over the past years in relation to indigenous peoples issues in Kenya and beyond. Your wisdom and knowledge have contributed to our work on many occasions, including on the UN-REDD programme to the MAU Forest dialogue in Kenya.

It is UNEP's honor to address the 12th Session of the UN- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues today and would like to assure the UN-Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues of UNEP's continuous commitment to support the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Following a recommendation that this Forum made to UNEP in 2006 to develop an Indigenous Peoples Policy, I am happy to announce that UNEP's Executive Director has endorsed such a policy guidance in November 2012. It will be introduced to the UN-PFII and its participants during a side event on Thursday, 23 May at 6.30pm at the North Lawn Building, CR.7. The Document will guide UNEP staff to ensure that indigenous peoples' issues are adequately taken into consideration in our work. The Project and Programme Manual has been reviewed and will be revised to incorporate additional guidance and tools to implement this newly endorsed policy. We look forward to work with the Forum and its partners to make the Policy guidance a successful tool towards the effective inclusion of indigenous peoples and their issues in our work. I do hope you can accept our invitation to join us in this dialogue.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we all know, RIO+20 has been a major milestone for the global community towards renewing and re-establishing sustainable development. **A decision was also taken in Rio to upgrade and strengthen UNEP, through the following:**

- Establish Universal Membership in the Governing Council of UNEP, which is now called the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme
- Have adequate and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the UN and voluntary contributions to fulfill its increased mandate.
- Enhance UNEP's voice and ability to fulfill its coordination mandate within the UN and empowering UNEP to lead efforts to formulate UN system-wide strategies on the environment.

- And to ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and effective engagement of civil society.

The expected results of the latter will be a new accreditation policy and a stakeholder engagement policy that will address modalities for stakeholder participation in the intergovernmental processes and for mechanisms for stakeholders expert input and advice. The working drafts will be discussed with the member states and major groups.

As we also know RIO+20 has reaffirmed that improving transparency, public participation and accountability mechanisms, is critical for sustainable development. Principle 10 of the Rio declaration from 1992 provides that environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens. There has been a call for a global convention on access to information, public participation and environmental justice. RIO +20 encouraged however action at *all* levels and Latin America, led by Chile has put in place an initiative to establish a regional instrument to support the implementation of Principle 10.

UNEP continues to be engaged with indigenous peoples issues in particular through its collaborating center based in Norway: GRID Arendal, which is currently implementing a project on nomadic herders in Mongolia and the Russian Federation.

South-South Cooperation has expanded over the years, going beyond government-to-government exchanges to include businesses as well as civil society, educational institutions, multilateral financial institutions, regional banks and research centers, on a broad range of economic, social, environmental, health and cultural issues. Several countries of the South have become economic powerhouses with significant influence in their respective regions and beyond. New political and economic alliances among emerging economies reflect the dynamism and increasing influence of Southern economies in the areas of industrial growth, trade, investment, and technology.

Consequently, South-South Cooperation has become a key component of the annual strategic priorities of the UN Development Group and is therefore actively promoted as one of the principle mechanisms for the delivery of development support at country level. It will continue to be a central feature of UN operational activities for development, in the future especially in the post 2015 development landscape. The UN is best positioned to continue to play a prominent role vis-à-vis Member States. In 2008, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, launched the Global South-South Development Expo, a United Nations system-wide global event, designed to showcase successful evidence-based initiatives created by developing countries to address development challenges. It provides a powerful platform for Southern development actors to showcase their development solutions, celebrate successes, share knowledge and lessons learned, explore new avenues for collaboration and initiate new collaborative efforts. The GSSD Expo has since become an annual event hosted by UN agencies; (UNDP (New York 2008), World Bank (Washington DC 2009); ILO (Geneva 2010); FAO (Rome 2011) and UNIDO (Vienna 2012).

We are proud to announce the next expo will be hosted by UNEP from October 28 – November 1, 2013 under the heading “Building inclusive green economies – South-South Cooperation for sustainable development and poverty eradication” and would like to invite indigenous peoples to consider their participation and showcasing good practices.

Thank you, Mister Chair for this opportunity. UNEP wishes you a successful continuation of the Forum and we look forward to the discussions.