



## **13<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Agenda Item 4: Human Rights**

### **Statement by Ms Manuela Tomei (ILO) Co-Chair, UNIPP Policy Board**

*Check against delivery  
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Madam Chair  
Distinguished members of the Forum.  
Indigenous representatives,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen.

I have the honour to address the Forum in my capacity as Co-Chair of the Policy Board of the United Nations Indigenous Peoples Partnership (UNIPP).

UNIPP is a joint rights and results-based initiative whose key aim is to support efforts at the country-level for the realization of indigenous peoples' rights as recognized by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). UNIPP seeks to move the aspirations of indigenous peoples beyond the global advocacy bodies and international fora to concrete change on the ground to the benefit of indigenous women and men.

Launched in 2011, in response to the call of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) for greater coordination and joint action by UN system organisations at the country level, UNIPP combines the individual expertise and networks of five UN agencies: the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

Madam Chair, distinguished members of the Forum,

UNIPP underscores the significant place of indigenous peoples as rights holders under international human rights law. While the initiative is global in scope, its primary focus is at the national level. Working through the UN Country Teams, the five participating UN agencies work

closely with relevant key stakeholders namely, governments, the indigenous communities, civil society and the private sector to improve understanding of and respect for indigenous peoples' rights. The UNIPP framework presently encompasses country programmes in Bolivia, Nicaragua, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo and Nepal and a regional programme in South East Asia. The countries covered are home to approximately 100 million indigenous peoples which constitute around 30% of the world's indigenous population.

Madam Chair, distinguished members of the Forum,

UNIPP's initiative to support legal and policy reform and access to justice has resulted in the development of seven national decrees in the Republic of Congo, the reform of two national laws in Cameroon and the drafting and review of 16 new local/municipal decrees and national laws on indigenous peoples in Bolivia, Central African Republic, Nicaragua, Indonesia and Cameroon. These ongoing initiatives aim to ensure the recognition and inclusion of indigenous peoples' rights within local and national legal systems.

Let me highlight that many, if not most, of the activities being implemented by UNIPP are following up to specific recommendations issued by the UN mechanisms that deal mainly with indigenous peoples, namely the Permanent Forum, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), and the Special Rapporteur, as well as recommendations emanating from the UN human rights treaty bodies, the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review, and the ILO supervisory mechanisms.

By forging strategic partnerships, UNIPP has succeeded in enhancing UN country-level support for the implementation of international standards and in making indigenous peoples' issues more visible to a broad section of society. In doing so, consultation mechanisms and participation of indigenous peoples in national development were strengthened. Indeed, several national development programmes have taken indigenous issues into account for the first time.

Moreover, UNIPP-supported projects have served as catalysts in mobilizing additional resources for initiatives that address indigenous peoples' issues at the country level: an estimated USD 3.7 million in additional funds have been raised.

The increasing demand for UNIPP assistance from governments, indigenous organizations and the UNTCs is a very good indication that UNIPP has successfully created a shared vision on indigenous issues that needs continued support and commitment.