



PHILIPPINES

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STATEMENT OF THE DELEGATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

On the Report of the Working Group on the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples

1st Session of the Human Rights Council
Geneva, 27 June 2006

Mr. President,

The Philippine Delegation congratulates the Working Group on the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, for having made great strides in its last sessions in the fulfillment of its task. The hard work and steadfast efforts of the chair, states' delegations and indigenous peoples' representatives have yielded substantive and positive results.

My delegation also wishes to reiterate the Philippines' desire for the early finalization of the draft declaration, and for its eventual adoption by the General Assembly.

On the table is a draft Human Rights Council resolution recommending adoption of the draft declaration by the 61st session of the General Assembly. Also circulating is a paper containing proposed amendments to the draft resolution which basically call for further consultations in order to reach consensus on some outstanding issues before proceeding to recommending the draft declaration's adoption by the General Assembly.

The Philippine Delegation believes further discussion by the Council of the draft declaration, as contained in the proposed amendments to the draft resolution, would be a more conducive means of reaching consensus or broad agreement for the following reasons:

1. The Chair's proposed text has not been discussed by the Working Group, its mandate having ended at its last session. Thus, the draft declaration needs to be considered in order to identify any provisions or language that may need refinement; and an opportunity should be given for delegations to propose such refinements;
2. Moreover, the report of the Working Group, which contains the chair's proposed text of the draft declaration, is being submitted to the Human Rights Council for its consideration at this first session. The Council, which is a new body with new membership, should at least be given the opportunity to go over the text of the draft declaration.

Thank you, Mr. President.