



New York, 15 May 2006 - Secretary-General's video message on the launch of the Programme of Action for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

This is a day of celebration. We have gathered to welcome the General Assembly's adoption of a landmark document -- the Programme of Action for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

This Programme reflects rich and diverse input from Member State, Indigenous Peoples, the Permanent Forum and many parts of the UN family.

It offers specific recommendations in the areas of development, the environment, education, health and human rights. It seeks to help indigenous people build better lives through full participation and partnerships. It aims to enable them to win respect for their identities, their languages and their cultures.

In the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to preserve and maintain the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous communities.

They recognized that the sustainable development of indigenous peoples is crucial in the fight against hunger and poverty.

They pledged to keep advancing the human rights of indigenous peoples, and to present for adoption a UN declaration on indigenous peoples's rights as soon as possible.

The Programme of Action is meant to give practical effect to those words, for the benefit of all indigenous peoples -- from the northern reaches of the Arctic to the pastoralist communities of Africa.

Today, I call on all States to work with indigenous peoples to translate the Programme into reality on the ground. Let us aim to make it mean something positive -- a change for the better -- in the life of every indigenous person, wherever he or she may live.