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Statement by  
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**UNDP statement**  
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**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**  
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**Policy Framework**

1. UNDP is honoured to be participating at the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
2. The UNDP corporate mandate, development cooperation processes and agreements, and the aspirations of indigenous peoples guide UNDP engagement with indigenous peoples and their organizations. As many of you know, UNDP issued a policy guidance note on engagement with indigenous peoples in 2001. The objective of the policy note is to provide UNDP staff with a framework to guide their work in building sustainable partnerships with indigenous peoples. Rooted in the goals and targets set by world leaders at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, it is underpinned by the international human rights framework and a full recognition of indigenous peoples' vital role in, and contribution to, development.
3. The policy also addresses the debilitating incidence of human poverty in most indigenous communities as visible evidence of discrimination (unequal access to productive resources and basic social services) if not exclusion. Issues related to ownership and use of land and natural resources; education and health; protection of cultural and intellectual property; and participation, are to be tackled in the context of poverty reduction strategies that fully take into account the rights of indigenous peoples. Moreover, the policy provides practical mechanisms for operational and policy engagement at the global, regional and country levels.
4. In addition, the UNDP Civil Society Organizations Advisory Committee composed of 15 civil society leaders who provide strategic advice to the Administrator and senior management on key policy advocacy

initiatives includes a member of the Permanent Forum and has been a vehicle to bring indigenous peoples' concerns to the attention of UNDP senior management.

5. National CSO Advisory Committees have also been established in Botswana and Brazil. It is through these mechanisms that we can push to address indigenous peoples' issues.

### **Human Development Reports**

6. Policy advocacy documents, such as national and regional Human Development Reports (HDRs), supported by UNDP, aim to take stock of human development at country-level, examine trends in major human development dimensions and to stimulate public debate and political attention to most pressing development priorities.
7. UNDP understands the importance of disaggregated data for development. Some regional and national HDRs have included data disaggregated by ethnic groupings, language groupings, gender, geographic regions, age and many other groupings. Through disaggregated data, both quantitative and qualitative, these reports are able to better identify disparities and pockets of deprivation and discrimination and formulate policies to address these constraints to human development progress. This kind of data collection is to be promoted and fostered.
8. With its focus on exploring issues related to building inclusive societies and managing diversity, the global HDR for 2004 "*Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World*", has provided a key platform for debate on indigenous peoples' concerns.
9. In the near future, through its regional programme on indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia, UNDP will be developing an Asian Regional Human Development Report focusing on indigenous peoples.

### **Global Programmes**

10. UNDP also seeks to balance its work on policy making with programme development and promoting action on the ground.
11. We are particularly proud of the Human Rights Strengthening Programme (HURIST), a joint programme with UNDP and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The indigenous peoples' component of Hurist aims to create a mechanism for dialogue in countries to ensure the participation of indigenous peoples in UNDP policies and programmes.
12. In Kenya, in 2004, Hurist established an advisory mechanism on indigenous issues known as the United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee of Kenya or UNIPACK. Based on the successes

of the HURIST programme, the government of Catalonia in Spain has committed funding for three more pilots in Latin America.

13. The Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme has been working to facilitate indigenous peoples' access to grants by exploring innovative grant making proposals such as videos. This year the GEF SGP seeks to develop an *indigenous support network* to disseminate awareness and monitor progress on GEF SGP grant access for indigenous peoples.
14. UNDP is currently implementing a \$2 million Regional Initiative on Strengthening Policy Dialogue on Indigenous, Highland and Tribal Peoples' Rights and Development (RIPP) in Southeast Asia. The project aims to build capacity, strengthen information networks, and support indigenous peoples' full and effective participation in policy dialogue at all levels. A key intended output will be an Asian Regional Human Development Report on indigenous peoples.

#### National programming

15. A lot of UNDP support to indigenous peoples happens at the country level. In Bolivia for example, the country office is undertaking studies in demography and poverty monitoring that looks at how to collect data on indigenous peoples to monitor poverty inequalities at national, provincial and municipal levels. In Guatemala, a civil society participation small grants programme focuses on strengthening the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. Activities include: raising awareness and strengthening legislation; establishing institutions for the promotion and protection of indigenous women's rights; and awareness raising on human rights treaties and norms.

#### The Millennium Development Goals

16. Over the last three years UNDP has engaged in raising awareness of the MDGs among indigenous peoples and their organizations at various international fora.
17. UNDP seeks to collaborate with indigenous peoples and their organizations in achieving the MDGs and recognizes greater efforts are needed to include the participation of indigenous peoples' organizations in the development of the MDG Country Reports that monitor the progress of the goals. Greater coordination between indigenous peoples' organizations and the Millennium Campaign is still needed, nevertheless the first steps have been taken.
18. Some challenges at localizing the MDGs exist across UNDP practice areas. They include decentralizing national planning initiatives to ensure that national policies fit with local needs. A key component of this work is to ensure the full participation of local actors, among them

communities. Some initiatives have focused specifically on bringing visibility to community practices, recognizing their important role in meeting the goals, and scaling up their practices to the policy level. These initiatives entail promoting access to information, building capacity, broadening peoples' participation, strengthening cross-sectoral networks, building alliances and engaging communities at the dialoguing and negotiating table. Outlets have included peer-to-peer exchanges among communities to share their knowledge, skills and practices, community perspectives of the MDGs and empowering community based organizations to advocate on behalf of their communities for implementation of the goals.

19. In the next two weeks the forum will debate the MDGs. We look forward to your advice in the following areas:

- a. How can indigenous peoples' issues and indicators be better integrated into the MDGs?
- b. How can indigenous peoples better engage with the Millennium Campaign? And,
- c. How can we create better channels of information flow and ensure greater participation in the MDG monitoring process?

20. We hope that we will receive from the Forum a plan of action that is doable with concrete recommendations for the UN, which we can move forward at the global level, regional, national and local levels.

21. Finally while not minimizing the challenges, we would urge that we build on the increased awareness, dialogue and successful experiences from our growing collaboration to ensure that indigenous peoples are both a partner and a beneficiary of the MDGs and that what we say here at headquarters get translated into action at the national and local levels.