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ANNUAL PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

UN Human Rights Council
Thirty-sixth session
11 – 29 September 2017

**10th Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:
Achievements and Challenges**

Thank you Mr. President,

The adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ten years ago was a land-mark event, codifying a number of norms essential for the continued vitality of Indigenous peoples and their cultures. The process of its negotiation, which allowed for effective participation of Indigenous representatives set an important precedent.

However, much remains to be done to realise the hope that the Declaration incarnates. In Australia, the Special Rapporteur found that over-representation of Indigenous peoples in prisons has gotten worse, not better, since her predecessor's visit. In Peru, Indigenous people exposed to heavy metals and other chemical substances have no access to adequate health services. In Canada, families report serious concerns about the adequacy of police investigation when Indigenous women and girls are reported missing. In India, police have registered over 80 complaints by Indigenous people claiming their land was bought fraudulently by companies, but have failed to launch investigations. In Brazil, the government has taken measures to systematically undermine the process of demarcating and titling Indigenous land. And in Kenya, the Sengwer people have been evicted from their forest home without effective consultation, citing conservation concerns without sufficient evidence.

Indigenous human rights defenders are being harassed and even murdered around the world simply for standing up to states and companies that try to seize their land and territory. Finally, the United Nations is currently debating proposals for a new modality for the participation of Indigenous Peoples in its bodies. Amnesty International considers it vitally important that the UN finds a way to recognise their specific forms of self-organisation.

Thank you, Mr. President.