



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Statement by the Permanent Observer Hon. Patricia Torsney

**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
13th Session**

**Discussion on the Principles of good governance consistent with the
United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,
Articles 3 to 6 and 46 [Item 3]**

**United Nations General Assembly
14 May 2014**

Chair,

Thank you for the opportunity to express once again the IPU's commitment to promote the rights of indigenous peoples as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The IPU welcomes the Forum's focus in this 13th session on the theme of good governance. Over the past year, the IPU has promoted democratic governance in the negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. Democratic governance is at the heart of IPU's mission to strengthen democracies through more representative, accessible, transparent, accountable and effective parliaments. These are the foundations for the IPU's work on developing standards for democratic parliaments.

Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination according to their environment and socio-cultural values can only be guaranteed when political institutions are founded on these democratic principles. Self-determination requires that indigenous peoples are included in the formulation and adoption of public policies and in particular those that directly affect their lives and their communities. Democratic principles ensure that indigenous peoples, and especially the most marginalized groups within - women, children, and the disabled - can be involved in the decision-making processes and that their interests are properly represented. Conversely, although representation is not achieved only by the adequate numbers of indigenous persons in parliament, under-representation indicates a weakness of the democratic structure.

Chair,

Parliaments play a significant role in ensuring self-determination of indigenous peoples through their law-making and oversight functions. The IPU has dedicated much effort to promoting the rights of indigenous peoples.

Four years after the IPU international parliamentary Conference of Chiapas on *Parliaments, minorities and indigenous peoples: effective participation in politics*, the Parliament of Bolivia and the IPU organized an *International Parliamentary Conference on Parliaments and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in April 2014. Discussions were focussed largely on the implementation of the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples including the promotion of good governance.

We were pleased to share the *Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra* with this Forum and I draw your attention to these recommendations for parliaments:

- advocating the participation of indigenous peoples in the political processes;
- incorporating the principle of free, prior and informed consent in domestic legislation and safeguarding its implementation; and
- ensuring that indigenous peoples are involved at all levels of the decision-making process relating to their rights.

The IPU hopes to further discussion of these issues in the debate leading up to the World Conference.

Thank you for your attention.