

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' CAUCUS STATEMENT
FOR THE
INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUDING
THE BROAD THEMES OF:**

- 1) **"SLUMS AND URBAN POVERTY- CHANGING PATTERNS OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS", AND;**
- 2) **"WOMEN IN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES,"**

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Mr. Chairman, I get worried when we speak about slums and urban areas and the problems people face due to rural urban migration without looking at the reason why this migration is taking place. We need to address these causes, such as the lack of land as populations increase, poor governance in land management and the general increase in poverty, just to mention a few.

Mr. Chairman, as we talk about the urban slums let us not forget to critically look at the life of the rural communities and their habitats. I am at this point specifically concerned about Indigenous Peoples and their settlements. Most Indigenous Peoples today still live in human settlements outside of the modern cities and industrial centers. Indigenous communities embody historical relationships to their lands, territories, and natural resources. Their livelihoods and economies are adapted to these diverse ecosystems.

Many Indigenous Peoples, especially from Africa, move from place to place in search of pasture and watering points for their livestock and thus their primary settlements are not secured when they are away. The women and children who are left behind are vulnerable to human rights abuses and misplacement.

Indigenous Peoples urge for the development of action plans on human settlements. The implementation of integrated land-use planning and resource-base management strategies must be strengthened to provide for the security of tenure and legal protection of Indigenous Peoples' lands, territories and natural resources. Legal protection for Indigenous Peoples' rights, in this case specific to the development process, including in the planning and implementation of accessible water, sanitation and other infrastructure projects for human settlements, is the outstanding obstacle that must be addressed.

Safeguards must be put in place to protect the less powerful and vulnerable Indigenous communities whose well-being is closely linked to biodiversity and integrates the natural world. Mechanisms must be put in place immediately to stop the over-exploitation of lands, unsustainable agricultural practices, the pollution of water, the logging of forests, the harmful dumping and accumulation of wastes, as well as the extraction of other natural resources found on Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.