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Press Release

OAS Meeting on Rights of Indigenous Peoples Urges General Assembly to Adopt Resolution on the Issue

April 21, 2012

The XIV Meeting of Negotiations in the Quest for Points of Consensus on a Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples closed today at the Organization of American States (OAS) with an urge for Member States to agree on a further path to follow at the upcoming OAS General Assembly.

The OAS Secretary of External Relations, Alfonso Quiñonez, officially brought the meeting to a close thanking participants for "allowing a discussion of the scheduled issues in an open way and in good faith, in a respectful and, above all, constructive atmosphere."

Looking ahead to the upcoming OAS General Assembly to be held in Cochabamba, Bolivia from June 3 - 5, Ambassador Quiñonez said the event would provide a further opportunity to progress. "At the Assembly in June the Member States should adopt a resolution that will show us the path to follow, in addition to determining the continuity of the work that remains before we can adopt an American Declaration on the rights of our indigenous peoples," said Secretary Quiñonez.

The OAS official noted that the meeting had dealt with some of the most complex issues in the draft Declaration and complimented the group on its technical expertise, as well as the "solid basis of the positions expressed, and the possibility of using as a reference the Declaration of the United Nations, that may be very useful in reaching agreements."

Secretary QUIñonez specifically thanked France, Nicaragua and Mexico for their financial contributions to the process, which allowed for the presence of representatives of various indigenous groups at the meetings, held at the OAS headquarters in Washington, DC, and he asked other Member States to follow their example: "I urge the Member States and the Permanent Observers to maintain their support so that we can continue to benefit from the wise accompaniment of the indigenous peoples in these negotiations."

Ambassador Diego Pary, Permanent Representative of Bolivia to the OAS and Chair of the Working Group, also pointed to the opportunities presented by the upcoming General Assembly to be held in his country, and expressed gratitude to the indigenous delegations for their dedication to the project. "I would like to thank the efforts and the commitment shown by the representatives of the indigenous peoples, who despite the length of negotiations on this project, continue with the same conviction they've had since 500 years ago with great flexibility, and demonstrating that the principle of collective construction of our peoples is part of our very lives," said Ambassador Pary.

For her part, June Lorenzo, North American Co-Chair of the Indigenous People's Caucus, emphasized the group's continuous efforts to build consistency in the process, and urged respect for the process of building the draft Declaration. "We believe that when true and meaningful dialogue has taken place in these meetings we have advanced in our mutual understanding, we have contributed to an increased recognition that human rights standards should be applied to resolve historic injustices, and we advance

this process," she said.

A gallery of photos of the event is available [here](#).

A video of the event is available [here](#).

For more information, please visit the OAS Website at www.oas.org.

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