Thank you Madam President

On behalf of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, we want to contribute to the issue of Protected Areas and Biodiversity.

As indigenous peoples, since immemorial time, we have been contributing to the conservation of biodiversity, through our traditional practices within our ancestral territories. However, in many cases, we have had negative experiences, where in order to contribute to the conservation, protected areas have been imposed in our territories, without taking into account our free, prior and informed consent, putting in risk our traditional practices and our ways or life.

As indigenous peoples we share the concern about environmental degradation at a global level and we want to help to reduce the existing threats on ecosystems and biodiversity. However, it must be taken into account that, as indigenous peoples, we have our own areas of conservation and our own way of managing our traditional territories, and the result of these practices is the wealth of ecosystems and biodiversity in indigenous territories.

Therefore, Indigenous peoples have knowledge on how to restore degraded ecosystems and we want to put these knowledge at the service of the parties, so that, together we can build a better future for the next generations.

Mrs. President, in order to ensure the conservation of biodiversity in protected areas and to restore ecosystems, the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities is essential in all the initiatives and activities to be undertaken within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

We are concerned that in the proposed recommendations there are no references related to the indigenous people’s contributions.

Therefore, we recommend the following:

a. To recognize the contribution of biodiversity conservation systems in natural areas and the restoration of ecosystems of indigenous peoples and local communities.

b. Support all conservation initiatives by indigenous peoples and local communities with necessary resources to strengthen their traditional practices for the
conservation of biodiversity and restoration of ecosystems within their ancestral territories.

Madam President

We reiterate our readiness to contribute with the parties to seek mechanisms that will ensure the conservation of the biodiversity and ecosystem restoration.

Thank you.