OPENING STATEMENT

Mr. Co-Chairs

The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) congratulates you on your election. We thank the Secretariat for its hard work in preparing all the documents for this meeting. We also thank the kind contributions made by Norway, Sweden, Finland, New Zealand, Australia and Germany, that enabled the Voluntary Fund to support participation of a significant number of indigenous peoples and local community representatives.

We note the change in organization of work and, in particular, the shortening of the number of meeting days of the Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions. Although this makes our work more challenging, we look forward to effectively engaging with the working group on all agenda items.

As we move towards stronger emphasis on implementation of COP decisions, we recognize that some matters traditionally addressed by the working group, such as agenda item 3 on review of implementation, will be moved to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI). We propose that modalities ensuring the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities developed by the 8(j) Working Group be adopted by the SBI and other subsidiary bodies and working groups, such as when reviewing the implementation of items relevant to Article 8(j) and related provisions.

The IIFB welcomes the draft guidelines on subtasks under tasks 7, 10 and 12 of the multi-year program of work, covering prior and informed consent, fair and equitable benefit sharing, and prevention of unlawful appropriation of traditional knowledge. These draft guidelines provide an important starting point for in-depth work in the context of, for example, a contact group. We look forward to strong guidelines containing core principles that build on and do not diminish the human rights standards developed by relevant bodies, including human rights treaty bodies and special procedures, on free, prior and informed consent. The guidelines must fully respect our rights as owners and holders of our traditional knowledge, including indigenous women in particular.

We likewise welcome the progress under Task 15 on guidelines for repatriation of traditional knowledge, while recognizing that much work remains to be done. The report of the expert group contained in document INF/4 contains a rich record of the presentations and discussions of the experts that we feel could have been more fully reflected in the Annex of document 9/3. We look forward to presenting our concrete proposals when agenda item 5 is taken up or in the context of, for example, a Friends of the Chair. We recommend that the next phase of work on these guidelines...
include further face to face and online consultations, as well as technical expert group (AHTEG) meetings at the global and regional levels. We request the Executive Secretary to produce a technical series publication covering this subject matter. We call for financial and technical support for this work.

We note the relevant recommendations of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) addressed to the working group and acknowledge that most of the recommendations have been addressed and acted on. We strongly support the recommendation that invites the COP-MOP of the Nagoya Protocol to consider and take action on the recommendation to adopt the terminology “indigenous peoples and local communities” and to safeguard all rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Finally, the in-depth dialogue has the potential to shed light on key issues and challenges relevant to traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities. We look forward to participating actively in the interactive dialogue. The IIFB is currently consulting on the topic for the next in-depth dialogue, and will present our proposal to the body in due time.

Thank you, Mr. Co-Chairs.