Thank you, Mr President and Co-chair.

This statement is being made on behalf of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity. The Indigenous Peoples and Local community representatives participating here at this meeting would like to thank you for advancing the important work on Article 8(j) and related Provisions. We look forward to productive collaborations in the future with Parties and other support organizations at national, regional, and international levels.

**Voluntary Fund**

We would like to thank Parties, specifically Japan, Australia, and Finland, for their contributions to the Voluntary Fund that have enabled many of the Indigenous Peoples and Local Community representatives to participate in this meeting. We respectfully request donor countries, Governments and relevant funding institutions to make additional contributions to the Voluntary Fund to facilitate our participation in the intersessional meetings and COP11. We remind Parties that the involvement of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities is fundamental in strengthening relationships and dialogue for the ultimate goals concerning the conservation of biodiversity. Our contributions to advancing this work on behalf of our own peoples and communities are critical.

Earlier in the week, the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities reminded the Parties of their responsibility to carry out their work on the premise of the rights of Indigenous Peoples as directed by the UN Declaration Rights of the Indigenous Peoples and the various UN bodies that are mandated to deal specifically with indigenous peoples’ issues.

In many international fora the UNDRIP has become a normative framework in elaborating on all of its work. It provides vital context for interpreting Indigenous rights and responsibilities, as well as related State obligations.

**Article 10c**

IIFB is pleased with the progress made this week on the development of a Plan of Action on customary sustainable use as a new major component of the revised Programme of Work for Article 8(j). We thank the co-chairs of the contact group and the Secretariat for their help in moving the deliberations forward, and appreciate the collaboration with delegates to formulate a set of indicative tasks under the Plan of Action.
While several of the indicative tasks respond to the concerns and priorities as brought forward by the IIFB, we are disappointed about the lack of progress made on the issue of land and resource rights in relation to customary sustainable use. We have repeatedly explained that secure rights to our lands, waters and resources are fundamental to maintain and carry out our customary sustainable practices in our territories, and this was clearly reflected in the report from the expert meeting on 10c as well. However, the most important tasks in the annex to the draft Decision – which originally dealt with legislation and land and resource rights – have been substantially weakened by deleting some key concepts, and have been left in brackets for the COP to resolve.

We hope that COP11 will address this issue in a satisfactory matter and will re-include the link to legislation and rights in relation to lands, waters, and resources traditionally occupied and used by indigenous and local communities. This would build on previously agreed texts in the Akwe:kon guidelines and principle 2 of the Addis Ababa guidelines on sustainable use, which mentions that local users of biodiversity need to be sufficiently empowered and supported by rights, to be responsible and accountable for use of their resources. The rationale recognizes that if Governments recognize and respect "rights" or "stewardship" authority, sustainability is generally enhanced. It would be appropriate for the COP to underline this when adopting the new Plan of Action on customary sustainable use.

Like Parties, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities believe in the importance of the work under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The health of the environment is the basis of life for all of us living today, and for all future generations. To this end, we are committed to our work, the wishes of our communities, and health of the Earth’s biodiversity that sustains us.

Thank you.