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Mr. Secretary-General  
Mr. President  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Delegates  
Honoured Elders of the World's Indigenous People  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honour for Canada to introduce into this General Assembly -- on behalf of the many cosponsors from all regions of the world -- the commemorative resolution for the international year of the World's Indigenous People. I am also pleased to inform you that Panama, the Philippines and Spain have agreed to co-sponsor the resolution.

Many governments have contributed their experience and insights into the Resolutions which have brought us to this day. It is only fitting to acknowledge, as well, that indigenous representatives have been an inspiration to this process with their ideas and advice.

The objective of the year is to strengthen international cooperation in finding solutions for the problems faced by the World's Indigenous Communities.

Its theme "Indigenous People" -- a new Partnership" -- speaks of change, of progress, in relationships between Indigenous People and the many nations of the international community. It speaks of advances that have been made, and will continue to be made. It speaks of the central role of Indigenous People in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the activities for the year -- and the years to follow. Previous resolutions, incorporated in this resolution, are explicit on this point.

The Resolution seeks to encourage various systems of government and public administration to acknowledge the special needs of Indigenous People in the formulation of their national policies, without settling them apart from the societies within which they live. Each country can follow the path most appropriate for its situation.

Paragraphs 3 to 7 and 10 lay out a path to follow to give practical effect to the social, cultural, environmental and economic objectives of the year.

We are particularly pleased to acknowledge the establishment of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Agreement was signed in Madrid at the Second Ibero-American Summit last July and communicated to the Secretary-General on November 24, 1992. This agreement typifies the kind of support sought for the objectives of the International year.