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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

9 August 2013

On this International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, we highlight the importance of honouring treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements between States, their citizens and indigenous peoples. Such consensual arrangements enable better understanding of their views and values and are essential for protecting and promoting rights and establishing the political vision and necessary frameworks for different cultures to coexist in harmony.

Indigenous peoples represent remarkable diversity – more than 5,000 distinct groups in some 90 countries. They make up more than 5 per cent of the world's population, some 370 million people. It is important that we strive to strengthen partnerships that will help preserve cultural vigour while facilitating poverty reduction, social inclusion and sustainable development.

We must ensure the participation of indigenous peoples – women and men – in decision-making at all levels. This includes discussions on accelerating action towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and defining the post-2015 development agenda. Indigenous peoples have made clear that they want development that takes into account culture and identity and the right to define their own priorities. The post-2015 development agenda needs therefore to incorporate the rights, perspectives and needs of indigenous peoples.

Next year's World Conference on Indigenous Peoples offers an opportunity to advance the cause of indigenous peoples everywhere. I urge Member States to take concrete steps to address the challenges facing indigenous peoples, especially their marginalization and exclusion, by honouring all commitments and examining what more can be done. Let us work together to strengthen indigenous peoples' rights and support their aspirations. Let us create a world that values the wealth of human diversity and nurtures the potential it offers.