

Thank you Chair for giving me the floor. We bring warm greetings from our lands and territories. The Indigenous Caucus congratulates you and the Vice Chairs on your election and looks forward to progressing the negotiations under your leadership toward binding legal protections for the traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions of Indigenous Peoples. We also thank the former Chair, Lilyclaire Bellamy for her steadfast commitment to meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in the IGC negotiations and likewise anticipate your dedication to ensuring the voices of Indigenous Peoples are heard.

However, as has too often occurred in the past, the depletion of the Voluntary Fund has significantly curtailed our ability to fully participate in today's IGC 48 session and the upcoming IGC 49. This is deeply concerning, as our presence is indispensable to this process. Indigenous Peoples bring a unique perspective and a profound understanding of the resources and issues at hand.

We are immensely grateful to the Member States that have generously contributed to the Voluntary Fund over the years. Their support has been instrumental in enabling our meaningful participation. It is regrettable that with the current depleted state of the Fund no Indigenous representatives have been funded to attend IGC 48 or IGC 49.

We note with appreciation the funding provided for Indigenous participation from the seven socio-cultural regions in the Diplomatic Conference on Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge, and the significant impact that had on the Caucus' ability to participate meaningfully in those critical negotiations resulting in WIPO's first treaty expressly including Indigenous Peoples and provisions essential to protection of our rights.

We urge WIPO Member States to join us in exploring innovative solutions to ensure consistent funding for our participation throughout the ongoing IGC negotiations, whether through the Voluntary Fund, the WIPO General Fund, or a dedicated fund. By doing so, we can guarantee the continued participation of Indigenous Peoples from all seven sociocultural regions in the vital work of the WIPO IGC.

Thank You