Madame Chair,

Thank you for this opportunity to make a general statement. First, of all, we should not forget that it is because of the existence of the Article 8j and Related Provisions, that indigenous peoples have been able to participate in many of the CBD processes. At the UNFCCC, the absence of any working group which deals with traditional knowledge is one factor which has not allowed for full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the processes of that Convention.

Therefore, proposals to end the Working Group on Article 8j and Related Provisions will effectively undermine the participation of indigenous peoples which will be very unfortunate as this is one of the good practices which the CBD should be proud of.

At the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, we held an International Expert Workshop on Indigenous Peoples’ Traditional Knowledge in 2005. In this workshop we saw realized that around 11 UN agencies and programmes are dealing with traditional knowledge but the coordination between these different bodies has not been systematized yet. Therefore, we called on these various bodies to come together and discuss amongst themselves how to coordinate better so that their programs and projects around traditional knowledge will converge towards the greater protection of indigenous peoples traditional knowledge. This effort will be more easily facilitated now because of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We also produced a report on the Role of Customary Law in protecting Indigenous traditional knowledge. This report affirms that customary law can indeed be a sui-generis form of protection of traditional knowledge. We are therefore calling on the Parties, indigenous peoples and UN agencies to work together to collect experiences of how customary laws protect indigenous traditional knowledge.

Madame Chair, another follow up report will be done on this which will be submitted next year to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 8th Session and we will submit this to the CBD Secretariat to feed into the next Conference of Parties.