

DEFENSORIA DE LOS PUEBLOS INDIGENAS DEL ECUADOR AMERICA (DEPIEA)

35 - 22 103 RD St., First Floor, Corona NY 11368 * (718) 810-7565 *
depierunas@yahoo.com



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES (May 12 - 23, United Nations, New York)

Distinguished Permanent Forum Experts, indigenous brothers and sisters of the world. Today, we have come with the hope to recommend powerful issues and ideas that will later be aimed at strengthening and guiding toward the happiness of our communities. Our non-indigenous brothers and sisters have been talking about and planning economic and social policies for a long time. Sometimes, I do not even remember the promises that they made to me, much less to my ancestors long ago. Most people have read the economic theories of Adams, Marks, Angels and other economic and social policy gurus. However, the indigenous worlds are still as they were hundreds of years ago in an economic and social sense; meaning that, we practice "el trueque" the exchange of food and other items related to economics. In other words, we the indigenous people continue to live with our traditional social policies, which indicates that we must respect them and try to integrate them into the economic and social policy planning of the modern world.

These are my following recommendations to all of you in attendance at the Permanent Forum:

1.- Many modern societies are only based and focus on the material world. I am pretty sad as my people are back in the mountains that the majority of people of our beautiful "Pacha Mama" Mother Earth do not want to acknowledge that we have a responsibility of remembering the spirituality. The spirituality is powerful and helps us to be strong and guides us on the right path. When spirituality is missing from our lives, we become as dried leaves and confused about who we are, what we are doing and where we are going.

The spirituality also make us think very deeply that we the indigenous are not "infected" by the idea of "private property" that came with civilization and with globalization to our isolated communities. The indigenous peoples of the world are still thinking and practicing ideas of "collective property" (It belongs to everyone who is at that community...). I pledge the world to include the idea of spirituality in the economic and social programs. Without this spirituality we will always be lost.

2.- The economists and social planners and indigenous peoples, native and not native, need to pay attention to the youth and children. We claim every day that --children are the future-- but we forget to implement practical programs for them. Children are left alone in the slums of the inner city. They have been discriminated and raped; and the economists and social planners are loudly preaching that we are assisting them. One of the youth who came to share his experiences said "you mentioned that you care about children..." but my indigenous little brothers and sisters are crying for help. I recommend to all of you, who are attending the UN meeting, to invest money social resources into the young population, especially "young women" because they are the essence of the humanity. Young women are the shining stars and they like our Mother Nature that feeds, shelters and loves us.

3.- Our economic plan and social policies must be addressed towards the small entrepreneurs rather than to big corporations that will go to our communities and destroy what is left of it. By statistics that have already been published by many institutions—we know that there is poverty in our communities. However in the native worlds, we are poor in the material sense but not in a cultural or spiritual way. Indigenous worlds are still using the "informal system of economics". Therefore, distinguished peoples of the Permanent Forum take seriously my recommendations of sharing the money directly with our communities.

4.- Our States can not function alone or privately and pretend that we, the indigenous, do not exist. The economic and social planners of indigenous issues must share the plans, and incorporate our indigenous economists in your financial institutions. We are aware that within the past 500 years, we the indigenous peoples have been denied the opportunity to be part of the system. Also, we have received so many empty

words of economic help. Those promises have passed as a dream of last night. I do not deny that our non-indigenous brothers and sisters have been working with good intentions of integrating the indigenous economists. The indigenous peoples must be in your system. I believe that our indigenous economists can share and be part of the solution instead of being manipulated. The economic system of this world does not exist only with your theories.

5.- It seems that we have forgotten that "there are indigenous emigrants" populating different cities of the world, for example the United States. They have been suffering in their soul and bodies in their adopted homes all kinds of atrocities that as they used to suffer in their own communities. The youth, children and indigenous young women are not free from the poverty and social discrimination in the cities. How can we ignore and pretend that we do not have problems in a developed countries? Economic and social planners must try to understand the indigenous peoples that are far away from their homeland. I remind you that money must be invested in and for the indigenous peoples in their communities and adopted host cities of the world. I would like to recommend to incorporate the immigrants issues in your social and economic plans. We the indigenous immigrants are also part of your system of States that are called "civilized, powerful, and democratic." The indigenous youth and children are "children too", do not deny the helpless indigenous children, such as the child that is thirsty for knowledge and economic and social help. It does not matter if you are indigenous or not, we all deserve help and respect as you do. Invest money and planning to encourage strength in the indigenous emigrant's worlds.

In conclusion, our indigenous youth and children are our own mirrors and hopes of the future. Most of us are old already—we have only a few days or years left to struggle to change the life for our youth and children. We must focus to revindicate and integrate spirituality as part of our system and lives. The modern world is not able to survive alone regardless that they have powerful economic and social systems. We the indigenous peoples of the world are part of your economic and social plans too. Come to our communities and experience the material poverty we have. Perhaps then plan you can plan what you want to do and where to invest your money. The indigenous peoples ought to be integrated in your financial institutions without any discrimination. Those indigenous economists can guide you to the triumph and happiness that all of us are seeking. Lastly, your money must also be invested in the emigrants. The economic and social problems of indigenous peoples are not only in our States, we also have similar problems here in the United States too.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and indigenous brothers and sisters of the world.

**HOPE, FAITH,... AND LOVE TO ALL OF YOU AND OTHER BEINGS OF THIS "PACHA MAMA"
(MOTHER EARTH)**

Nicholas Chango of Salasaca-Ecuador.