



Agenda Item 6, Future Programme of Work

Joint Statement of Indigenous Peoples' Caucus on Sustainable Development On Future Programme of Work

(Tebtebba Foundation, Indigenous Environment Network, International Indian Treaty Council), Ixacavaa, African Indigenous Women's Organization, Indigenous Information Network, Asia Indigenous Women's Network, Cordillera Peoples' Alliance)

Presented by Vicky Tauli Corpuz of Tebtebba Foundation

Thank you Mr. Chairperson for giving us this opportunity to share our views on how the Permanent Forum can undertake its future programme of work. I will start with our recommendations and the justifications for these.

1. The Permanent Forum should at all times use the human rights-based framework to guide its work.

This was affirmed by the Indigenous Peoples' Caucus on Sustainable Development the 11th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and also in the Kimberly Declaration and Indigenous Peoples' Implementation Plan of Action.

By this we mean that when it coordinates and gives advice to the UN bodies, specialized agencies and member states, the framework underpinning all these efforts is how these are promoting the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of indigenous peoples. These rights are the key cross cutting issues which will be used to evaluate the effectivity of programs and policies of these bodies.

It is in this light that there is an urgency for the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The absence of a UN-General Assembly adopted Declaration makes the work of the Permanent Forum more difficult. It should have a framework of reference to use in its work.

2. The Permanent Forum should prioritize 10 key recommendations which can apply to the various UN bodies for more realistic implementation and to ensure that monitoring will be more effective.

At the first session last year and this second session the number of recommendations proposed are much to plenty and ten years would not even be enough to consider all these. Having 100 recommendations will scare away UN agencies and scaling these down and organizing them in clusters will increase the chances of these being met. It will also lessen the potential frustration on the part of indigenous peoples whose expectations for what the Permanent Forum can achieve are very high. A matrix can be made which can have three columns: The first column will contain key thematic areas which are priorities for the next two or three years. The second column will have the key activities which can be undertaken under these themes. The third column will identify the cross-cutting issues which have to be considered for both the key themes and the activities. The cross-cutting framework as mentioned earlier will be civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

3. The Permanent Forum should monitor how the UN bodies and specialized agencies at the country level and regional levels are opening up to indigenous peoples.

At the first week when I presented a joint statement of the caucus I mentioned that, generally, the country offices of UN bodies and the World Bank are highly inaccessible to indigenous peoples. This is a common experience of most indigenous peoples. There is a high level of resistance to indigenous peoples in these offices because those who are here are the elite in the country who are usually the ones discriminating indigenous peoples, and expatriates who have very limited knowledge on indigenous peoples. It is an imperative, therefore, that the information about the Permanent Forum and what the agencies have said and committed in their interventions at the forum be disseminated to the country offices. Steps for coordinating activities between the various UN offices within a country or a region should also be taken or further strengthened. On the part of indigenous peoples, it would be good if they can also strategize on how they can get the UN bodies at the country and regional levels to be more responsive to them.

4. The Permanent Forum at the next session should have a report or compilation of the various laws and policies on indigenous peoples of UN member-states.

Constitutional changes and policy reforms directly related to indigenous peoples have come about in the past 10 or 20 years. It would be worthwhile having a picture of this worldwide so that other governments can learn from the experiences in other countries and gain lessons from this. While we know that many existing policies and laws on indigenous peoples are not implemented as they should, it would still be good if the UN has a record of these for indigenous peoples and for governments.

5. The Permanent Forum should be able to get some UN agencies to coordinate on how they can work together for the disaggregation of data on indigenous peoples. Then a few countries in various regions can be identified to be pilot areas where this could be done.

Mr. Chairperson, these are our key recommendations on the future work of the Permanent Forum and next year it would be good to see some developments on these.

We would like to thank the indigenous peoples who have stayed on for these two weeks to raise their issues and recommendations. We would also like to thank the governments, especially the Ambassadors who took time out of their busy schedules to be with us. It is a sign of success of the Permanent Forum that many governments, UN agencies and specialized bodies have come to contribute to discussions here. Finally we thank the members of the Permanent Forum and we congratulate and thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for ably steering this second session. We look forward to seeing you again at the next session .

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