

9th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

11 – 15 July 2016

Agenda 7 : The Sustainable Development Goals and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Presented by: Tuly Labanna Mrong

Thank you, ~~Mr.~~ Chairperson.

On behalf of the Asia Caucus, I would like to present our statement on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

~~Ms.~~ ^{person} Mr. Chairman, the Preamble of the UN Charter includes "employ[ing] international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all people." This goal emphasizes interdependence among nations and reflects global equity among peoples and among nations. Correspondingly, the SDG's 17 goals and 169 targets are framed in an inclusive approach to development that are set to be achieved by 2030. However, the defined goals seem to address only larger communities who had adopted consumerism culture as a way of life.

As Gandhi wrote, "The economics that disregard moral and sentimental considerations are like waxworks that, being lifelike, still lack the life of the living flesh." (Gandhi, *Young India*, 27 October 1921) What we need is to live in harmony where resources and responsibilities are shared, where no one individual is disproportionately powerful or wealthy. "People are valued for their contribution to the community and not for individual personal wealth and power from a rigged game. Resources are shared so that families, communities and the natural environment thrive and survive not just in the present but for generations to come."

Felix Diaz, one of the leaders of the indigenous protest camp in Buenos Aires likens this to a fire. "I like to think of a communal fire as a symbol of our humanity," said Diaz. "One person adds wood, another adds dry leaves and each contribution brings light and warmth to the whole group."

As such, the SDGs do not represent the flames of change. They are more of a smoke signal; a mere distraction. The hope now rests in their potential to spark indignation, to help build a movement of people who recognize the true depths of the challenges indigenous peoples are facing. This emerging movement is increasingly standing with and learning from indigenous peoples all over the world in their struggle to protect what we have left, and return to a way of life that is more balanced and in harmony with the living force of the whole planet.

~~Ms.~~ ^{chairperson} ~~Chairman~~ Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate the critical lesson learned from the MDGs in relation to indigenous peoples. The fulfilment of the rights of more than 370 million indigenous peoples across the world as enshrined in the UNDRIP is an imperative and crucial determinant.

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Indigenous peoples' beliefs originated on the principle that the Earth gives us life - that is why for indigenous peoples, she is Mother Earth. When hunting or gathering, we only ever take as much as we need; never more. We rotate hunting territories to allow the land to replenish itself and ensure that the delicate balance of the eco-system is maintained. It is no coincidence that 80% of the Earth's remaining biodiversity can be found on indigenous territories. As such, achieving SDGs will not be possible without comprehensive realisation of our collective rights to lands, territories and resources. We would then like to reiterate our strong view that the lands of indigenous peoples are critical to be included in the SDGs indicators.

We call on the member states, the UN agencies and mechanisms, and all similar duty-bearers to pay particular attention to data collection and disaggregation. Data collection and disaggregation are critical in tracking changes and progress of the condition of indigenous peoples. For three years now, indigenous organisations with the support of the International Labour Organisation have started a collaborative initiative called "Indigenous Navigator." This is an initiative aimed to generate a worldwide data directly produced by indigenous peoples to monitor the implementation of the UNDRIP, including their rights to lands, territories and resources at national and local levels. It should be noted, Mr. Chairman, that indigenous peoples have been playing a central role in the data collection. And that is how it should be in other processes that affects and will affect the lives of indigenous peoples. They should be at the heart of the process, actively in control of their lives.

The "Indigenous Navigator" can also be used to track the progress and achievements of the SDGs. We look forward to get more support and collaborate with broader range of organisations, institutions and UN agencies, including the Expert Mechanism.

We are fully committed to work hand in hand with all our indigenous brothers and sisters across the world to achieve the SDGs. We then call on all duty-bearers to also commit and work with us in realising development justice for indigenous peoples and ensuring that no one indeed will be left behind.

M. X *Ms. Chairperson*
~~Mr. Chairperson, if you would allow me I would like to take this opportunity thank the UN Voluntary Fund for supporting me to attend this year's FMRIP session.~~

Thank You.