

Youth Caucus draft statement on Human Rights

Thank you madam chair,
Here are the issues we would like to address:

A. Education

We the Indigenous Peoples have the right to our own forms of education as well as to have the dignity and diversity of our cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations appropriately reflected in education and public information (UNDRIP Articles 14 & 15). The lack of Indigenous perspective in colonial education systems results in non-indigenous populations having little to no knowledge of Indigenous Peoples' history, culture and distinct human rights. Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples remains globally commonplace, in part caused by the absence of education, and poses major obstacles when Indigenous peoples attempt to practice their rights under UNDRIP. Many Indigenous youth worldwide attend state run public education institutions that instill false information about our histories and lead to a sense of disconnection from our cultures.

We affirm that Indigenous Peoples have the right to determine what we want to learn and what non-indigenous populations learn about us, instead of being educated according to the curriculum of our colonizers (UNDRIP Article 14).

Therefore, we suggest the UNPFII to work with UNICEF and UNESCO to establish capacity building programs that will work to increase education about the diversity, history and rights of the Indigenous Peoples, not only for Indigenous youth but also for non-indigenous populations in all regions to aid in implementation among public education systems.

B. Indigenous Decision Making Bodies

According to UNDRIP articles 4 and 18, Indigenous Peoples in order to exercise self-determination, have the right to autonomy and our own decision-making institutions and mechanisms. However, without accordance with our own procedures, the forms of "government" forced upon Indigenous Peoples by colonial government often do not reflect our perspectives or traditional decision-making bodies.

We recognize the limitations to the participation of Indigenous Peoples in UNPFII and the High Level Plenary Meeting and caution against movement to further limit representation from non-member state recognized Indigenous governments. In many cases the reason Indigenous peoples enter the international forum is to evade the oppressive member state governments that limit our participation in decision making processes which directly affect our communities.

We urge UNPFII to work with member states and Indigenous communities to facilitate the realization of Indigenous decision making bodies and include the full, equal and effective participation of Indigenous youth.

C. "Sustainable" Development

We the Indigenous Youth Caucus recognize that as Indigenous Peoples our human rights are tied directly to the rights of our Mother Earth. Indigenous youth have the right to protect our territories from colonial governments and multinational corporations/interests that would destroy our natural resources without free prior and informed consent (UNDRIP Article 32). A current example of a violation of this article can be found in the Yaqui Nation which has been severely impacted by the damming of the Haik Vatwe or Yaqui River. The extreme drought that has been caused by the diversion of water, by the Mexican government through the Independence Dam, from the Hiak Vatwe endangers the Yaqui way of life as farmers. This generation of Yaqui children will be the first to grow up without this way of life if water is not restored to the river.

We request the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples to work closely with the Inter-Agency Support Groups on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Development, United Nations Human Rights Council, and the Special Rapporteur on the rights on the Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on Water to look into human rights violations by the Mexican government against the Yaqui people of the state of Sonora.

D. Restorative Justice

There're a lot of juvenile delinquents of indigenous peoples who are having trouble of going back to the original life as dignified indigenous peoples. As being indigenous peoples and the juvenile delinquents, they're suffering double discriminations besides cultural bias. Moreover, some even got killed during serving sentence. As a consequence, they are being more and more marginalized and gradually drifting away from their mother cultures even lost their life in young age.

We indigenous peoples have our own approach of reconciliation. We see crime as a result of breaking the balance of social network. So when the balance being broken, we need to restore it, instead of isolate people from the society. This is the spirit of restorative justice.

According to above mentioned, we urge that the UNPFII, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, EMRIP, UN Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, such as UNICEF, and other associated agencies in the UN system, work together with the states to:

- 1) Investigate the conditions of the indigenous peoples in prison including youth
- 2) Initiate a mechanism with cultural sensitivity of helping indigenous inmates and juvenile delinquents return to society in the community-based approach, as to realize the Restorative Justice.

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E. Retaining cultural identity.

Many Inuit Greenlanders or indigenous peoples a part of the Danish Realm immigrate to Denmark because of the equal citizenship they are given. However those who immigrate do not receive culturally appropriate services to aid in their transition and are not given support in their integration into Danish society (UNDRIP Articles 6 and 7), and this is in spite of they do have the same rights and services as danish citizens. Inuits who move to Denmark often do not speak the language nor understand how to access basic services such as healthcare and housing. This leads to high levels of substance abuse, homelessness and overall inequality for Inuit people who immigrate to Denmark.

We request that the Permanent Forum work with the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights and UNICEF to establish the development of culturally appropriate services in Denmark to aid Indigenous Peoples, especially youth and children, in the transition to Danish society while retaining their unique cultural identity.

F. Systematic violence and criminalization of indigenous peoples.

We express our concern regarding the systematic violence that indigenous youths are suffering through criminalization of social protesting and the constant enforced disappearances that also remain uninvestigated; an example of this is the disappearance of 43 young indigenous students in Ayotzinapa, Mexico. We join the demand for safe return of the 43 students and that the perpetrators behind their disappearance must be brought to justice.