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Half Day Discussion on the rights of indigenous peoples

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EU Intervention

The European Union would like to thank the distinguished panelists for their interventions regarding the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in disaster risk reduction, and prevention and preparedness initiatives. Our discussion today has demonstrated that indigenous peoples are often among the poorest and marginalized that are most exposed to disasters. The EU is of the view that the future Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) should better target and empower those most in need and vulnerable, harness the important potential of civil society and have a specific focus on the local level and on building resilience.

Moreover, the new HFA should be more inclusive and gender-sensitive. A better targeting and empowerment of particularly vulnerable persons (such as children, elderly, persons with disabilities, homeless, poor and food insecure people) and civil society are needed. This should include effective use of appropriate social safety net mechanisms and social protection systems responsive to disaster risks. The role of women and their leadership in building resilience in households and communities should be promoted.

As highlighted by the panel, comprehensive risk assessments, strong coordination mechanisms between local and national administration with active engagement of civil society and awareness raising initiatives are instrumental. Disaster risk management requires an all-of-society engagement and empowerment, equality, and an inclusive and non-discriminatory participation.

The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) has increased its involvement in disaster risk reduction and preparedness projects over the last decade. The Disaster Preparedness ECHO programme (DIPECHO) is the core element of these efforts with an allocation amounting to €325 million. The key goal of DIPECHO is to increase communities' resilience and reduce their vulnerability. DIPECHO is a people-oriented programme, helping communities at risk of disasters to better prepare themselves by undertaking training, establishing or improving local early warning systems and contingency planning. It also encourages citizens, civil society groups and local, regional and national authorities to work more effectively together.

Relevant, local, traditional and indigenous knowledge, culture and practices are to be taken into account in risk-informed decision-making. To conclude, we would like to invite the distinguished panelists to share their ideas and examples on how the traditional indigenous knowledge can be better integrated into planning processes and strategies on disaster risk reduction at local, regional and national levels?