

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Sixteenth session
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Item 9: 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development

Statement read by Anjali Daimari on behalf of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Caucus

We wish to draw the attention of the Permanent Forum that for the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development to be held in July, seven states in Asia with indigenous peoples in their constituents have agreed to present their Voluntary National Review (VNR). These states are 1. Thailand, 2. Malaysia, 3. Indonesia, 4. Japan, 5. Nepal, 6. Bangladesh and 7. India

While we acknowledge the efforts of most of these states in holding multi-stakeholder's consultations as part of the preparations for their national development plans or strategies to achieve the SDGs, indigenous peoples' leaders and representatives substantively excluded from these consultations. Furthermore, there has been an utter lack of outreach and information dissemination, awareness and capacity building done by these and other states to facilitate the effective and meaningful participation of indigenous peoples in the SDG processes at all levels. Thus, millions of indigenous peoples across Asia are left in the dark while states are designing their implementation of the SDGs.

What is also deplorable is the lack of reference to indigenous peoples in relation to the national SDG targets, including clear commitments to undertake data-disaggregation by ethnicity or indigenous identifier in relation to the indicators and in the establishment of baseline data. This will certainly lead to the invisibility of indigenous peoples in the SDG implementation and monitoring process, and thus will most likely result in the indigenous peoples being left behind, like in the case of the Millennium Development Goals.

During the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) held on March 29-31, 2017 where five indigenous peoples' representatives participated along with other major groups, we have noted some positive developments based on the reports and statements of states such as the recognition of the multi-dimensions of poverty, the need for strong political will to implement the SDGs, the recognition of the importance of stakeholders' participation, and respect for human rights. However, these commitments need to be reflected in their plans, strategies and actions on the ground to gain transformational impact, particularly in ensuring the respect for and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples and the enhancement of their contributions to sustainable development through their effective participation.

Target 2.3 clearly provides for the "secure and equal access to lands" for indigenous people, while Target 4.5 deals with equal access to all levels of education and vocational trainings, including indigenous peoples. However, states have not made explicit reference to indigenous

peoples in the implementation of these targets. Further, the proposed indicator on the legal recognition/security of land rights for indigenous peoples and local communities, which cuts across many of the goals and targets, is still not included as one of the global indicators. This is very critical for indigenous peoples in ensuring that the SDGs will achieve their aim of “leaving no one behind”

The thematic report of the UN ESCAP, UNDP and ADB (Asian Development Bank) for the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) made reference to indigenous peoples, although the section of the Road Map of the APFSD under the Social Development did not include indigenous peoples while all the other marginalized sectors are clearly targeted.

Based on these developments, the Asia Indigenous Peoples Caucus recommends the following to the Permanent Forum:

1. To call upon states to conduct widespread awareness-raising for indigenous peoples on the SDGs, and establish a functional mechanism of engagement with indigenous peoples to ensure their effective participation on SDG processes at the local and national levels with an enabling environment as well as provisions for financial and technical support and assistance.
2. To call upon states to ensure data-disaggregation by ethnicity and/or indigenous identifier in relevant indicators related to indigenous peoples, and ensure the participation of indigenous peoples in monitoring the SDGs.
3. To call on the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG), states and UN agencies to adopt and support the indicator on the legal recognition/security of land rights to be included within the global indicators.
4. To call upon UN agencies, funds and programmes including UN country teams, to conduct outreach at the local and country level for indigenous peoples, including developing partnerships to support indigenous peoples’ self-determined development and in data-gathering/ documentation and monitoring of the SDGs.
5. To call upon regional inter-government bodies/forums working on the SDGs to include the effective participation of indigenous peoples by taking into account their specific conditions, and to ensure that recommendations include explicit references to indigenous peoples in their plans and reports in order to make us visible and not “left behind”.
6. For the Permanent Forum to undertake evidence-based studies in relation to the priority issues, needs and aspirations of indigenous peoples on sustainable development in collaboration with indigenous peoples’ organisations, the IPMG, research institutions and others.