

15<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)  
9-20 May 2016

Intervention on Agenda Item 4: Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

**Joint Statement By: Atama Katama, Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network & IENC  
(Asia)**

Warm greetings everyone! I am Andrew Atama Ambrose representing the Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network (APIYN). I am grateful for this opportunity to present to you the concerns of indigenous youth, particularly in Asia, on the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In the midst of neoliberal globalization where indigenous peoples are victims of violence and ethnocide, indigenous youth bear the brunt of the State and corporate plunder of our ancestral lands, territories and resources. At a young age, our civil, political, cultural, social and economic rights are being violated. We face enormous challenges in regard to land grabbing, establishment of eco-park and national park, declaration of reserved forest, extraction of natural resources, militarization, population transfers, top-down development. The continued displacement of indigenous communities due to land grabbing by States and corporations results in a gap between younger generations and our ancestral lands, which may lead to a loss of identity if not immediately addressed.

We are not spared from the impact of militarization, including various human rights violations. In India, Nepal, Malaysia and the Philippines, indigenous youth leaders and activists are being subjected to arbitrary arrests and detention; enforced disappearance, extrajudicial killings.

In the whole Asia region, the State obligation to provide education for children and youth remains neglected. Worse, the educational system is being commercialized, which is an added problem/difficulty in our access to education. In the Philippines, the Lumad indigenous peoples' initiative to set-up their own educational centers is being attacked by the State instead of supporting them. In Indonesia, there are concerns that youth who live in hamlets do not have access to education due to lack of facilities, expensive costs or unsuitable curriculum in formal education that do not support the wisdom of indigenous peoples.

As youth, we are also asserting for our full and effective participation in peace and reconciliation processes since there is no significant involvement of Indigenous youth in policy-making processes related to peace and resolution especially at the country level. It is also a fact that Indigenous women and girls fall victim to sexual and physical violence perpetrated by State military agents, especially in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Philippines. Most of the victims are indigenous youth, and while the number of victims is increasing, not a single victim was given justice. In Malaysia, the indigenous youths are now exposed to sentiments strongly linked to questionable ancestral claims, violent extremism and bandit groups, criminal syndicates, kidnapping for ransom and recruitment to terrorist group.

In Nepal, the Indigenous Peoples including the youth are still living without a roof in their head after the destructive earthquake in Nepal last year, which claimed thousands of lives and large numbers of peoples there became homeless. The government of Nepal failed to give proper attention for the resettlement of Indigenous Peoples and youth affected by earthquake, and rehabilitation of indigenous communities and their livelihood.

Mr Chairman,

On this agenda item, IENC Asia refer to Article 14 & 15 of UNDRIP on the Right to Establish and Control our own Education System and Quality & Culturally Relevant Education and the Right to Dignity and Diversity of their Cultures, Traditions, Histories and Aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in Education and Public Information.

In South East Asia, children & youths are facing language, cultural & geographic barriers where health & education is concerned, as governments continue to implement a monolingual and monocultural system of education in the national language.

Despite multilingual and multicultural nature of the States in Asia, such an education system still does not ensure cultural security for IP children and youths. As a result of this, there is a high rate of drop out of school children in the indigenous communities. Based on the experiences of many countries, educationists are proposing life skill learning including music, songs & traditional cultural expressions. It has been proven that mother-tongue-based multilingual education is one intervention to tackle issues of this high-drop-out rate.

However, despite the evidence based good practices of the implementation of mother tongue based multilingual education approach in several countries in Asia, there has not yet been a policy in place to support the implementation of MTBMLE. There is also shrinking space of IP cultural expressions in public life, spaces, in media & and especially in schools. Hence, there is no cultural security for IPs in these public services including schools.

We therefore jointly recommend that the Permanent Forum take immediate actions to urge States:

1. To investigate human rights violations, prosecute the perpetrators, and ensure that justice is served for all the victims;
2. To revoke anti-people policies, such as the Mining Act and Oplan Bayanihan in the Philippines, that result in numerous rights violations
3. To take appropriate measures to ensure that freedom of expression and freedom of assembly is truly respected;
4. To take necessary action plans to protect the existence of ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of Indigenous Peoples within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.
5. To assist in the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees and war-affected indigenous peoples.
6. To recognize Indigenous peoples' customary laws as well as conflict prevention and peace-building practices and, where possible, incorporate it into conflict-resolution

processes, peace-building initiatives and post-conflict development policies and programs for capacity-building.

7. To pay special attention as needed on issues of resettlement, especially those that involve any form of population transfer, that has the aim or effect of undermining indigenous peoples' rights; and any form of assimilation or integration by other cultures or ways of life imposed on them without free, prior informed consent.
8. To ensure and enhance Indigenous peoples right to full and effective participation in the state program, policies and budget, through appropriate procedures and through their representative institutions, in accordance with States' international obligations.
9. To pay proper attention to Indigenous Peoples including Indigenous Youth affected by earthquakes, drought and other natural disasters, and ensure the fulfillment of their basic human rights to food and shelter.
10. To provide support for the capacity building of Indigenous Youth to protect and promote the rights of indigenous peoples and inclusive development;
11. To ensure the involvement of indigenous youth in policy-making and the formulation of national programs.
12. To recommend UN Agency to facilitate policy dialogues with member states in Asia, with the participation of indigenous people, to adopt necessary laws & policy to provide adequate resources for the implementation of MTBMLE.

Thank you and long live international indigenous peoples' solidarity!