

10th Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
10 – 14 July 2017

Agenda Item 7: Indigenous peoples' participation in the United Nations system

Statement of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact and Asia Caucus

Ms. Chairperson,

In follow up to the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, we welcome the constructive and open informal dialogue between States and indigenous peoples on the possible measures necessary to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant UN bodies on issues affecting them during the 70th and 71st session of the General Assembly. We also highly appreciate the efforts that the two advisors from indigenous peoples to the President of the General Assembly put in during the dialogue.

However, we note with concern that various States, particularly from Asia, entered into discussion on a "minimum rather than a consulted solution" at the end of the dialogue. We urge the States to engage in the follow up of the process with good faith and respect for the rights of indigenous peoples as guaranteed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

While we acknowledge the progress made in identifying possible measures to enable the participation of indigenous peoples in meetings of relevant UN bodies, we reiterate the following **position of the Asia Caucus** as agreed during the 2017 Asia Regional Preparatory Meeting on UN Mechanisms and Procedures related to Indigenous Peoples recently held in Chiang Mai, as presented in the recent session of the UNPFII¹.

1. We call for participation of indigenous peoples in relevant meetings of **all UN bodies, including the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies – ECOSOC and Human Rights Council included as per agreed modalities.**
2. We call for selection of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions through **a mechanism comprised of seven indigenous nominated experts based on the regional representation from the 7 indigenous socio-cultural regions, with gender balance.**

Ms. Chairperson,

We further affirm that State recognition should not be a restriction from selection of such indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions while regional balance of participation of such representatives and institutions should be criteria.

In Asia, most States do not legally recognize indigenous peoples and that results in continued violation of their rights. Self-identification as indigenous peoples is part of core

¹ <http://iphndefenders.net/statement-asia-indigenous-peoples-caucus-agenda-item-11-b-follow-up-outcome-document-world-conference-ways-enhance-participation/>

right to self-determination of indigenous peoples as guaranteed in the Declaration. The definition of indigenous peoples at the hands of States poses the risks of roll back of the gains made with the adoption of the Declaration after decades-long negotiations.

At the same time, regional balance of participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions will allow for more diverse deliberations at the UN meetings to make them more richer and informed.

We thus again urge the States, particularly from Asia, through the Expert Mechanism to engage in the follow up process of the dialogue taking into consideration the above realities towards solutions-based deliberations. We also strongly request for regional consultations in the follow up process of the dialogue so that indigenous peoples from all regions can contribute to the process effectively.

Finally, we urge the Expert Mechanism to recommend the Human Rights Council to take lead, among UN bodies, in enabling participation of indigenous peoples in its meetings on issues affecting as per the modalities proposed by indigenous peoples during the dialogue. We also urge the Expert Mechanism to partake in facilitating solutions-based deliberations with the States in the dialogue.

Thank you, Chair.

Delivered by:

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