

STATEMENT ON ASIA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ON THE SDGS

Agenda 8: “Indigenous peoples’ collective rights to lands, territories and resources”

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The global agreement on sustainable development is underpinned by the realization of human rights and calls to leave no one behind. However, Indigenous Peoples [as one of the recognized Major Groups] continue to experience serious challenges to their meaningful participation and [inclusion in relation to the] respect and protection of their individual and collective rights. In particular, many of the development targets to achieve the SDGs pose serious threats to the rights of indigenous peoples to their lands, territories and resources. These projects and plans include more than 100 large dams, [considered as clean energy,] in South and South East Asia, expansion of commercial agricultural plantations, infrastructure projects such as highways, which cut through forests and territories of indigenous peoples.

Many of these projects are being opposed by indigenous peoples because of clear violation of our rights to lands, territories and resources, self-determined development, cultural integrity, peace and harmony. However, as indigenous peoples voice out their opposition and take legitimate actions to defend their collective rights against development aggression, we are being intimidated, criminalized, arrested, detained and even killed. In this context, how can we speak of sustainable development when indigenous peoples are being silenced, excluded and treated as criminals or terrorist?

In the Philippines, at least 34 indigenous human rights defenders are accused as terrorists including the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, former member of the Permanent Forum, Joan Carling and former EMRIP expert Jose Molintas. This situation is not isolated in Philippines, as other countries in Asia, such as Cambodia, Bangladesh and Malaysia, have also experienced repression in the course of defending their lands and resources.

We call on the Permanent Forum to:

1. Recommend to States and development actors to ensure the recognition and protection of indigenous peoples rights [in general and their rights to their rights to lands, territories and resources] in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
2. Recommend to States to stop the criminalization and repression of indigenous peoples and establish an effective mechanism for the protection and access to justice of [land, environment and] human rights defenders
3. Recommend to States the inclusion and meaningful participation of indigenous peoples in the development planning process at local, national, regional and global levels, [including in the monitoring and reporting]
4. Engage more actively with States and development actors in collaboration with the Indigenous Peoples Major Group to promote the rights and aspirations of indigenous peoples in the SDG processes.