

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Thirteenth Session  
New York, 12-23 May 2014

**Agenda Item 7: On Post 2015 Development Agenda**

**Statement delivered by Grace Balawag on behalf of the Asian Indigenous Caucus together with the Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN)**

Thank you Madam Chair for this opportunity to share our views on this Agenda Item 7 on the Post 2015 Development Agenda. I take the floor on behalf of the Asian Indigenous Caucus and the Asian Indigenous Women's Network, and for the Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact and Tebtebba, who have been proactively organizing our constituents in our countries, Asia region and at the global processes in order to understand better and contribute substantively and constructively to the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Post 2015 development process.

Madam Chair, Members of the Permanent Forum, and Member States: Asia is home to two-thirds of the world's 370 million indigenous peoples; however, Asian Indigenous Peoples are still among the most marginalized and impoverished sectors due to non-recognition of Indigenous Peoples in some countries; and also due to continuous neglect and deprivation of basic social and economic services for IP communities and territories. Aggravating this marginal situation of Indigenous Peoples in Asia, is the current development paradigm of governments, wherein the economic priorities include the resource extractive industries on large-scale mining and logging, mega-hydro electric dams, monocrop industrial plantations, among others, which are being implemented within indigenous customary lands and territories. All these called "development aggression" projects have resulted to violation of basic human rights of indigenous Peoples, including indigenous women and

children, to the worst scenarios of killing and criminalizing indigenous leaders and activists who led opposition to such types of large-scale and destructive projects to our lands and resources. These had also caused dislocation and further marginalization of the Indigenous Peoples from our customary lands and territories, and the disruption of the continuing practice of our traditional knowledge, occupations and more sustainable livelihoods.

It is within this context of these Indigenous Peoples continuing concerns and issues, that we would like to raise your urgent attention and support on the importance of effective participation and inclusion of our issues and concerns in the SDGs/Post 2015 development agenda. The Indigenous Peoples' Major Group has been actively participating in the processes. However, despite our efforts, we note a severe diminishment of explicit and direct recognition of Indigenous Peoples and our multi-faceted issues and rights in the current draft document on the SDG.

Madam Chair, Members of the Permanent Forum, UN Agencies and Member States, we particularly call on your support to the following recommendations in relation to the SDGs/Post 2015 Development Agenda:

1. That the SDGs and Post 2015 Development Agenda should make a separate reference to Indigenous Peoples, and not lumped up with marginalized or vulnerable groups. We have distinct identities as indigenous peoples and we have a legal instrument, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which protect our identity and rights. With over 370 million people who identify themselves as indigenous, it is important for Indigenous Peoples to have a specific recognition within the SDGs/ Post 2015 development agenda. We do not want to face the same mistakes of the Millenium Development Goals, where Indigenous Peoples were invisible. We want to contribute and be active partners in defining and in the achievement of SDGs and the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

2. Inclusion of a target on protecting individual and collective land rights of indigenous peoples and land tenure under poverty eradication: Indigenous Peoples are increasingly losing on a number of issues such as poverty eradication, employment, human rights, culture, health and education. We would like to emphasize that Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately reflected among the very poor and this relates to lack of recognition of our land rights.

3. To focus on the measure of **well-being rather than on income alone** as most Indigenous Peoples rely on non-monetary forms of income such as subsistence resources from hunting, gathering, pastoralism, and small scale agriculture and farming, which make up to **90%** of our livelihoods. Monetary measure of poverty such as the \$2/day poverty threshold is not sufficient and can contribute to impoverishing Indigenous Peoples. We should move beyond the single-dimensional mind frame and collectively come up with a formula and indicators that truly reflect the measure of well-being such as access to resources, water, status of health and others.

4. Related to the poverty issue, we would like to recommend to **officially recognize traditional occupations as forms of employment as essential to achieving and sustaining Indigenous Peoples' and other communities' well-being.**

5. One of the main areas of concern is the lack of attention to culture. Culture is central to indigenous life and our identity and survival as Indigenous Peoples. We would like to see recognition of culture and a more concrete language that would ensure protection of cultural legacy and practices, without which, we can not be identified as distinct Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, we are asking to include **targets that respect and protect cultural diversity, the right and access to culturally appropriate education based on inter-culturalism and bi-linguism, and promote**

**intergenerational transfer of Indigenous Peoples' cultural heritage, traditional knowledge systems and practices.**

6. We are also greatly concerned that the draft SDGs and the Post 2015 development agenda fails to adequately address human rights as a framework for sustainable development. Thinking that human rights is a given is of course a wonderful prospect for the future generations but unfortunately, is not the case in the current political, economic and environmental realities across the globe. With this, we are pushing for **a stand-alone goal on human rights and "zero" targets on discrimination and violation based on gender, age, income, disability, ethnic origin, and etc.**

7. Finally, we would like to call on the private sector and international financial institutions to remain accountable and fully respect human rights and the environmental protection. It is extremely important that Indigenous Peoples voices are heard in the context of rights. Therefore, in addition to mandating independent human rights and environmental impact assessments, we are asking to include a target requiring governments, business and corporations to recognize and adhere to principle of **Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)** that would provide Indigenous Peoples leverage and a tool to keep our ancestral domains intact and free from encroaching industrial development.

We look forward to participating actively and constructively in the SDG/Post 2015 development process, and to sharing perspectives and examples of best practices of the protection of our individual and collective political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.