

Interactive dialogue with experts on the implementation and realization of the right to development, including the implications of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and a possible engagement with the high-level political forum, 4 April 2017

By Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim

Climate change, the right to development and the rights of indigenous peoples

Climate change impacts are worst every day in Africa, and in particular in the Lake Chad basin, at the heart of Sahel. Impacts on the environment and on people are terrible. My country, Chad, is entering, like every April, in the dry season. Last year, we hit a record of temperature, with more than 48 degree Celsius. This had terrible impacts on my people, nomadic pastoralist living around lake Chad, in Chad, Cameroun, Nigeria and Niger. With heat waves, comes problems related to :

- The quality of water, that impact health of both people and livestock
- The quantity of pasture available for our cows, and then a reduction of milk production which is the main economic resources for my people
- Multiple death and disease in livestock's, because our animals are not used to such extreme heat.

We are facing in Chad what our brothers and sisters are living with in Somalia and Sudan, where the face one of the most severe food crisis in the last 10th years.

Other elements can be used to illustrate climate impacts: I can mention water resources. Today, you can cross the rivers by feet just after the end of the rain season. Those rivers who flows into the Lac-Chad are now dry. The lake is shrinking with more than 90% of his water disappear on just 40 to 50 years. There are more than 30 millions peoples leaving around this lack without any livelihood or survival.

Those peoples who face conflict in their daily lives who do not think about their development, but about their survival and how they can ensure their next generations. I can never end talking about the climate impact at home.

But the good news is 2 years ago, 2015 the adoption of the Paris Agreement. Thanks to all countries leadership and commitments to this text who defined our future as human being. But is it enough to have a writing document without real action for those innocents' peoples experiencing all the negative impacts of climate change without causing any effect?

I think the answer is no. I am sure that many of you can agree that my people and all the victims of climate change, including those who died last weekend in Columbia wants more than simple words and concepts such as adaptation, mitigation, REDD etc. They need a climate that is protected. They need a real rain season who can infiltrate the soil and fertilize the land where they can get food, security and live. That is what most of our peoples, indigenous peoples looking for.

Development is a fundamental human right for all, but for indigenous peoples we cannot accept development in any price. We do not need a development that can grab our land, destroying our natural resources or poison our water. Development is relative to each understanding, let me give you an example. The Standing Rock in North America, is it a development using a pipeline crossing hundred and 1000 of lands, rivers and resources for survival of people. It is not a development! Each development must be sustainable. Meaning sustainable is respecting environment and the peoples who depending on the environment.

In my community, still now in this 21st century, kids are not going to school, not because they do not want to go, but because there is no school next to them.

There is not health centers less again hospitals to take care of them. Women still give birth traditionally and with no birth certificate for them kids. Even they do not know what is the birth certificate. Do not ask about ID. But the funny thing, we do familiar with the new technology such as mobile phone. For me the reason is that this technology generates money and the rest of education, health- demands money.

That's why as indigenous people, we demand to all partners, from government to bilateral agency, but also to the private sector to take clear commitments on including indigenous peoples in their action to promote development. We want government to develop programs dedicated to education, health, of indigenous peoples. We want to be part, as other communities, of the debate on elaborating the development policies. We want companies to recognize and implement the FAO guidelines on free and prior consent regarding land owing, to prevent land grabbing. Those are basic elements, basic rights. But all over the world, in Latin America, in Africa, in Asia, those basic rights are not implemented properly. This has to change now!

The Sustainable Development Goals is a framework that Member States have agreed upon and that will guide development policies until 2030. The inclusion of indigenous peoples in the preparation and monitoring of implementation plans is an essential strategy for States to ensure that the Goals are achieved. Development processes that include indigenous peoples see more success across the board and respect more the commitments of do not left no one behind.

It is necessary to highlight economic and pragmatic arguments to show Member States the benefits of implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I have plenty example where respect of Indigenous Peoples' Right lead to better development for all:

It is the case for conflict about land, where the peaceful resolution of conflicts through negotiation costs less than the use of force. We developed for instance 3D participatory mapping of natural resources in Chad, that help to reduce violence, and provide a safe basis for development for all communities.

The respect for indigenous peoples' rights can be a positive factor for the tourism sector.

Indigenous peoples traditional knowledge and cultural and environmental conservation practices are beneficial for society as solution to mitigate the climate impacts and environment crises as a whole. Addressing the gaps in health and education, besides being the duty of Member States in order to fulfil their human rights obligations, will contribute positively to development results, and respect for indigenous peoples' rights will prevent reputational risks.

Indigenous peoples are part of the solution. We are asking to get voice and space then we can play our role effectively to the word sustainable development.