

# **The Contribution of Development and Human Rights to the Global Commitment to Leave No One Behind.**

Good morning everyone.

On behalf of the Indigenous Peoples across the world, I would like to express my gratitude to OHCHR for engaging Indigenous Peoples in this very important seminar.

Historically, Indigenous Peoples experience inequality, discrimination, poverty and different forms of violence that not only hinder development initiatives in general but also promote misinterpretation about its concept which encourages human rights violation (in the name of development), instead of concentrating on their actual socio-economic, cultural development.

Now you may raise and highlight the question based on the debate ascended by the governments, global leaders and power-holders - that Indigenous Peoples are anti-development. They don't want infrastructural development, they protest against tourism, big company establishment such as- mining, hydroelectric dam, giant development projects in their territories. "Yes, they do protest and stand against any development endeavors that violate their rights both as Indigenous and as human in general which diminishes their existence and destroys Indigenous livelihood and Indigenous wisdom. Because, this is not how Indigenous Peoples contemplate development; This is not their Indigenous way of Development.

See, the global community and decision makers (world leaders) are talking about Sustainable Development and previously MDG just now in this 21st century when they realized the importance of collective actions to maintain peace, establish justice and to sustain and survive on this planet. But Indigenous peoples have been practicing sustainability for centuries and making sure that their future generations own this practice and respect collectiveness and co-responsibility. It is embedded in their traditional cultural practices and lifestyle. And that way they still protect, chant, cherish and celebrate their century old knowledge, custom-tradition, ancestral land and community forest.

We have been emphasizing on the fact that Development is a human right. Hence, I like to ask a counter question- what is development to you? How would you measure development? If you really believe and envision promoting development as a human right and anticipate development for Indigenous Peoples, shouldn't it be Indigenous peoples

themselves to determine the definition & nature of development, design and implement development projects and policies?

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Because defining development while sitting in a luxurious air-conditioned room and dreaming/imagining development while experiencing hardship in remote areas is a world of difference.

So it is high time we change the development narratives and **establish Indigenous development** engaging Indigenous leaders promoting **bottom-up approach**.

**Diversity is beautiful** and Indigenous Peoples are the lungs of world's rich cultural diversity who invest their time and knowledge in protecting nature, biodiversity and environment. They may not have well-documented narratives and so-called sophisticated theories for development, but it is the Indigenous Peoples who protect and worship mother nature most in the most sustainable way. It is their self-governance system that teaches and guides them to maintain peace, justice and practice sustainability in the society.

Although not adequate, there are some policies in the national level for Indigenous Peoples from the global south to the north, east to the west, but it is crucial to revisit those policies and develop more good policies engaging IPs in planning, implementing and decision making.

It is more important to determine globally with the commitment to protect IPs rights and start **a reconciliation process through sharing co-responsibility and promoting collectiveness** in order to fill the gap between IPs and the rest- particularly states and global leaders, and to establish cultural harmony and ensure leave no one behind in the development process.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ( particularly article 4, 31 and 32) have clearly stated that Indigenous Peoples have the right to self-determination and determine their own development, they have the right to build strategies for their own customary institutions and tailor their cultural development in their own way. So, all the states must fulfill the promises and agreements they made with Indigenous Peoples and take necessary actions to protect their rights. Moreover, In order to meet inclusive development states must follow and implement all the safeguards including UNDRIP, ILO Convention 107 & 169, all the National policies and follow international standard policies for protecting Indigenous Peoples human rights. .

I would end with some recommendation to ensure that leaving no one behind is implemented in development activities and that development contributes to the enjoyment of human rights

- Global community, especially decision makers including all the respective states, donors and UN agencies must see through Indigenous lens and realize Indigenous worldviews while implementing development projects for the Indigenous Peoples in their areas. It is very crucial to determine and follow the Free Prior and Informed

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Consent before visualizing any development projects in their territories and establishing people centered development.

- There is a need for holistic approach at the national, regional and global level to ensure meaningful engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples and all other vulnerable groups in the decision making and policy level to ensure development justice for all.
- Recognition of Indigenous knowledge, wisdom, norms and values. We only talk about capacity building for IPs, but it is equally mandatory to educate policy makers and funders on Indigenous perspectives, Indigenous wisdom and understand and realize their needs and priorities.
- Championing human rights for all- **Reconciliation and cultural harmony** is highly required. Reconciliation among the people, between science and Indigenous Peoples knowledge. So, document the knowledge and promote it widely. You have believed in Indigenous Peoples knowledge, food habits and lifestyle during crisis particularly during covid-crisis so why not all the time if it brings justice for all, if it makes the global community more resilient as a whole, a true global community?

Therefore all the states need to stop violating Indigenous Peoples rights and must fulfill the promises they did through agreement in different countries. Again I would emphasize on the call to recognize and establish Indigenous worldview and People centered development. It is high time the global community believe in Indigenous perspectives particularly their self-governance system, acknowledge their contribution and traditional knowledge, and most importantly weave trust and utilize the strength and expertise of youth. As we live in this technological era, we must create a bridge between science and Indigenous knowledge and have faith in youth capacity so we can ensure a sustained and just development for all, leaving no one behind.

Thank you.

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