



Eradicating Poverty and Achieving Prosperity in a Changing World

**Thematic Report of the Indigenous Peoples Major Group (IPMG) for
the SDGs for the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) for the
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Prepared by:

Joan Carling

Co-convenor of the IPMG for the SDGs

Adviser on the SDGs

Tebtebba (Indigenous Peoples International Centre for Policy Research and Education)

joan.carling77@gmail.com

www.tebtebba.org

April 2017

Executive Summary:

There are approximately 370 million (5% of the world's population) indigenous peoples worldwide but they account for about 15% of the extreme poor¹. Poverty is also a factor in the food insecurity of indigenous peoples. This alarming condition is the consequence of the historical colonization, subjugation and assimilation of indigenous peoples, and the prevailing discriminatory structures and systematic violation of the rights of indigenous peoples. The widespread loss of their lands, territories and resources, and has weakened their customary systems which are the bases of their distinct identities, dignity and wellbeing. The status of the ownership, control and security of indigenous peoples in managing their lands and resources defines their state of impoverishment.

The implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda for sustainable development requires a holistic and human- rights based-approach to ensure that their overall wellbeing, dignity, and cultural integrity are not undermined, and indigenous peoples are not "left behind".

Further, the SDG implementation shall be guided by the failures and gaps in the implementation of the MDGS such as the lack of data-disaggregation based on ethnicity, absence of effective participation of indigenous peoples, and inappropriate programmes for poverty reduction, education and health for indigenous peoples among others.

Particular on gender equality and empowerment of indigenous women (Goal 5), this needs to address the multidimensional discrimination and exclusion of indigenous women as women, indigenous and indigenous women. Further, their critical role and contributions in community development needs to be recognized and enhanced.

The Goal on sustainable infrastructure and industrialization (Goal 9) posed some threats to indigenous peoples if the "business as usual" approach will persist. The expropriation of indigenous lands and resources for infrastructure and industrial development has resulted to their impoverishment, loss of livelihood, cultural heritage and undermined their wellbeing. The legacy of States and the private sector of sacrificing indigenous peoples' rights and welfare in the name of development needs to be rectified through the implementation of policies and measures including the requirement for free prior and informed consent, along with the respect and protection of indigenous people's rights to their lands, territories and resources and to self-determination.

Millions of indigenous peoples are dependent on oceans not only for their livelihoods but for the culture, way of life, and identity. However, the worsening impacts of climate change, as well as severe pollution of oceans and extensive commercial fishing are now threatening the very survival of indigenous peoples dependent of oceans.

In the Means of Implementation, adequate finance and resources needs to be allocated to support targeted plans and programmes to address poverty, health, quality education and self-determined of indigenous peoples. Further, indigenous peoples should also be regarded as key actors and rights holders on sustainable development with the use of their traditional knowledge, sustainable resource management practices among others. Indigenous peoples have taken initiatives to establish partnerships for the recognition of their land rights called the Global Call to Action and in generating data through the *Indigenous Navigator* to monitor the implementation of the SDGs and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Key recommendations:

1. Recognize indigenous peoples as distinct group with specific conditions in designing appropriate poverty reduction and food security strategies and programmes with their effective participation
2. Ensure data disaggregation based on ethnicity/indigenous identifier
3. Institutionalize mechanisms for the effective participation and representation of indigenous peoples in processes relating to SDGs
4. Legally recognize the collective customary land rights of indigenous peoples and adopt indicator to monitor progress
5. Ensure the requirement for the free prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples on development projects that affects them, establish effective grievance mechanism and ensure equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms
6. Ensure adequate finance and resources for targeted programmes in plans address poverty, food security, health and self-determined development of indigenous peoples.

Introduction:

For indigenous peoples, “poverty and prosperity” is intertwined with the status of their ownership, control and access to their land, territories and resources, along with the practice of their traditional occupations and sustainable resource management systems and self-governance. Their land is also the material base of their distinct identities, spirituality and culture which are essential for their dignity and wellbeing. Thus, indigenous peoples’ perspective of being “poor” is being landless, and “prosperity” is having the security to manage and utilize their land and resources to meet their needs. The provision for basic social services such as appropriate health, education and infrastructures, and livelihood support are needed in addressing poverty in the changing condition of indigenous peoples.

The historical subjugation, assimilation and systematic expropriation of indigenous peoples’ lands, territories and resources, the non-recognition of their distinct identities; and the denial or their lack of access to basic social services, and the lack of participation in decision-making are the compounding factors for the widespread poverty amongst indigenous peoples. While indigenous peoples are 5% of the global population, they account for 15% of the world’s poor. As many as 33 per cent of all people living in extreme rural poverty globally are from indigenous communities¹.

Ending poverty for indigenous peoples needs to address the legacy of social injustice, and requires a holistic and human-rights- based approach that accounts for their socio-cultural specificities and perspectives; and their individual and collective rights as affirmed by international human rights instrument including the UN Declaration of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The lessons learned and gaps in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), provide invaluable guidance to the implementation of SDGs to ensure indigenous peoples will not again be left behind. Some of these are the lack of disaggregated data based on ethnicity/indigenous identifier providing difficulties in measuring achievements and gaps; non-recognition of indigenous peoples as distinct group with their own perspectives and rights; lack of meaningful participation in designing and implementing development interventions such as poverty reduction strategies; the focus of the MDGs is more on economic growth with less attention to environment and social dimensions; development of inappropriate programmes on poverty, health and education that are not culturally sensitive to indigenous peoples.

It is thereby critical that States and development actors take into account these lessons and gaps from the MDGs by developing specific measures and programmes, as well as institutionalizing mechanisms for the effective and meaningful participation of indigenous peoples in the whole process of the SDGs.

¹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Sustaining human progress: reducing vulnerabilities and building resistance, Human Development Report 2014, p. 3.

Further, in order for the SDGs to be transformational, States and development actors, including the private sector shall fully abide and operationalize an integrated approach of social, environmental and economic dimensions in the context of “leaving no one behind”, and operationalize the principles of non-discrimination, transparency, accountability and inclusiveness.

Goal 1: Ending poverty

The study² conducted by the World Bank on poverty among indigenous peoples in the developing world reported that in the ten (10) countries studied, indigenous peoples are poorer and the indigenous poverty headcount (the percent of population living below poverty line) is much larger than for the non-indigenous population; and the poverty gap is far larger than the national average. The severe poverty condition of indigenous peoples in both developed and developing countries manifests in insecure land and property rights, discrimination, heightened vulnerability to risk and climate change, and a wide range of health, education and other related socio-economic disparities among others.

In the US, the poverty rate for those who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native alone is around 27%.³ While in Mexico, 60% of Mexico's total indigenous population lives at the lowest socioeconomic levels. In Chile, 30.8% of the indigenous population lives in a situation of multidimensional poverty (income, housing, education, and health), is 19.9% for non-indigenous.⁴ In Vietnam, the national poverty rate is 9.79%, but 43- 48% in many ethnic minority areas.⁵

Recommendations:

1. Recognize the distinct identities and specific conditions of indigenous peoples in designing appropriate measures and programmes to address their impoverished condition in a holistic manner with their effective participation.
2. Ensure data dis-aggregation of data based on ethnicity and ensure participatory monitoring

² Indigenous Peoples, Poverty, and Development

<http://www.cambridge.org/zw/academic/subjects/economics/economic-development-and-growth/indigenous-peoples-poverty-and-development>.

³ The Indigenous World 2017,

http://www.iwgia.org/iwgia_files_publications_files/0760_THE_INDIGENOUS_ORLD_2017_eb.pdf.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Goal 2: Ending hunger

As poverty is a key factor of food insecurity, the levels of hunger and malnutrition among indigenous populations are disproportionately higher than among non-indigenous populations. However, there is a lack of data on the extent of their food insecurity. The continuing depletion of their natural resources, caused largely by the expropriation of their lands is a major factor of their food insecurity. Many indigenous peoples have been pushed onto the least fertile and most fragile lands, adversely affecting their food production and the practice of their traditional way of life.⁶ Others are forced to engage in commercial agriculture relying on the use of pesticides and harmful chemicals. Thus, traditional food systems are severely under pressure and rapidly being eroded by commercialized system.

Indigenous peoples' traditional livelihood practices such as hunting, fishing, gathering, shifting cultivation or rotational agriculture, pastoralism, and high mountain agriculture continue to define their culture, identity and wellbeing in addition to providing them food security. Indigenous Peoples' right to food is inseparable from their rights to land, territories, resources, culture and self-determination.⁷ However, indigenous peoples continue to be criminalized for these practices.

Target 2.3 explicitly include indigenous peoples, which calls for double agricultural productivity, including through secure and equal access to land and other productive inputs, knowledge and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment. This target provides the opportunity for states to respect and protect the collective land rights of indigenous peoples. This will not only address the issue of food security but also to ending poverty, for good health and wellbeing (Goal 3), of indigenous peoples, among others.

Recommendations:

- 1. legally recognize and secure the land rights of indigenous peoples and adopt a clear indicator in measuring legally recognized customary collective land of indigenous peoples (target 2.3)**
2. Protect and support the practice of sustainable traditional occupations and support sustainable livelihood practices of indigenous peoples for food security and repeal policies against such practices
3. Design programmes for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefit Arising from their Utilization on to the Convention on Biological Diversity on conjunction with indigenous peoples
4. Ensure the protection of indigenous peoples' traditional seeds

⁶ Knuth, Lidija, The Right to adequate food and indigenous peoples, FAO, 2009.

⁷ Ibid.

Goal 3: Health and wellbeing

There is lack of data on indigenous peoples' health and social conditions and specific location resulting to lack of information, analysis, and evaluation of programmes and services relating to indigenous peoples' health situation. The Report of the UN Permanent Forum on indigenous issues (UNFPPII) on Indigenous Peoples Access to Health Services stated that "indigenous peoples face a myriad of obstacles when accessing public health systems. These include the lack of health facilities in indigenous communities and cultural differences with the health care providers such as differences in languages, illiteracy and lack of understanding of indigenous culture and traditional health care systems. There is also an absence of adequate health insurance or lack of economic capacity to pay for services. As a result, indigenous peoples often cannot afford health services even if it is available."

In Cambodia, more than 20% of indigenous children under five children suffer from malnutrition and 52% are classified as underweight and stunted in growth.⁸ The gap in the life expectancy between indigenous and non-indigenous is as high as 20 years in Nepal. In 2016, Greenland recorded 47 recorded suicide cases.⁹ The four Inuit regions in Canada have rates of suicide that range from five to 25 times the rate of suicide for Canada as a whole which demand national action.¹⁰

In Venezuela in 2016, there is a deteriorating provision of health services to indigenous communities from the various municipalities of the State of Amazonas, as well as impacts to the outpatient care system, major shortages in the supply of medications and logistic resources (fuel, radios, and outboard motors), and a lack of budget funds for the functioning of fundamental programs such as control of malaria and other endemic diseases.¹¹

Recommendations:

1. Develop targeted programmes with the meaningful participation of indigenous peoples, and allocate sufficient budget and appropriate personnel for access to quality health services of indigenous peoples
2. Recognize and support traditional health practices of indigenous peoples
3. Expand health coverage to indigenous communities and ensure access to essential medicines and vaccines in a non-discriminatory manner
4. Design and implement specific measures in conjunction with indigenous peoples to address mental health of indigenous peoples including youth that are vulnerable to self-harm.

⁸ Submission by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) for the "Study on the Right to Health and Indigenous Peoples with a Focus on Children and Youth",

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Health/AIPP.pdf>

⁹ The Indigenous World 2017,

http://www.iwgia.org/iwgia_files_publications_files/0760_THE_INDIGENOUS_ORLD_2017_eb.pdf

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Goal 5: Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

Indigenous women face a multitude of discrimination and dis-empowerment due to the intersectionality of their status as women, as indigenous and as indigenous women. They are victims of the discriminatory policies and the prevailing patriarchal system including in most indigenous institutions resulting to all forms of violence and exclusion in decision-making processes. Indigenous women have less access to education, proper health services, employment among others. Further, militarization and conflicts are exacerbating the vulnerability of indigenous women to violence.

In Bangladesh, there were 58 documented cases of physical and sexual abuse in 2016, 17 rape with 6 murder after being raped, and 9 were gang raped¹. According to US government statistics, Native American and Alaska Native women are more than 2.5 times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than other women in the USA.¹²

Indigenous women continue to play vital roles in their communities. They are engaging in sustainable resource management and main food producers and holders of traditional knowledge that are critical to food security, resilience and adaptation to climate change, social cohesion of their communities, and as peace-makers, among others.

According to the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, “Land appropriation is not gender neutral and indigenous women’s rights interact with violations of collective land rights. The gendered effects of those violations become manifest in situations where indigenous women lose their traditional livelihoods, such as food gathering, agricultural production, herding, among others, while compensation and jobs following land seizure tend to benefit male members of indigenous communities”¹³

Recommendations:

1. Adopt special measures to combat discrimination, violence and harmful practices, developed and implemented with full participation of indigenous women, and ensure data dis-aggregation not only be sex but also by ethnicity/indigenous identifier
2. Legally recognize the land rights of indigenous women including within the collectively land rights of indigenous peoples.
3. Undertake Legislative reforms, capacity building and support to indigenous women’s organisations to overcome barriers and ensure land rights for women
4. Develop and implement affirmative policy to the participation of indigenous women in decision making processes, bodies and mechanisms

¹² Amnesty International, Maze of Injustice, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/women-s-rights/violence-against-women/maze-of-injustice>, accessed April 20, 2017.

¹³ Victoria Tauli Corpuz, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, August 5, 2015 A/HRC/30/41

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Too often, the lands, territories and resources of indigenous peoples are being used for infrastructure projects such as roads, energy projects, industrial zones in spite of the opposition of indigenous communities. Many of these projects are undertaken through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) which are often marked with conflicts and allegations of corruption. Thus, it is imperative that the participation of the private sector for infrastructure development among others shall ensure the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights, and policies for accountability and transparency of the private sector.

The largest wind power station in Scandinavia, the Björkhöjden and Ögonfågelnade, was opened in June 2016 that was opposed and criticized by the Sámi since it would destroy important reindeer grazing lands and migration routes, as well as Saami culture.¹⁴ In Mexico, the members of the San Francisco Xochicuátla Otomí community were not notified in advance of the commencement of the construction of the Toluca-Naucalpan highway that encroached upon their lands.

Recommendations:

1. Institutionalize the conduct of independent environmental and social impacts studies with the effective participation of affected indigenous communities
2. Ensure the requirement for the free prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples in projects with potential adverse impacts to them in line with the respect and protection of their rights to their lands, territories and resources, and to self-determined development
3. Adopt appropriate policies and guidelines for equitable benefit-sharing with the effective participation of indigenous peoples
4. Establish effective grievance mechanisms for indigenous peoples and other affected communities, and ensure the transparency and accountability of State and the private sector

Goal 14: Life below oceans

Millions of Indigenous peoples rely on the oceans, the seabed and the associated environments for their food, health, economic activities and cultural practices. All activities that have a negative impact on the oceans will have disastrous effects on the health, lives, economies and cultures of indigenous peoples, which, in turn, will only exacerbate their already poor living conditions and life expectancy for future generations. Not only do they

¹⁴ The Indigenous World 2017, http://www.iwgia.org/iwgia_files_publications_files/0760_THE_INDIGENOUS_ORLD_2017_eb.pdf

rely on the ocean for sustenance, but their relationship with the ocean is governed in accordance with their culture and management of resources.¹⁵

In the case of the Sami people, the Sami Parliament finds current salmon regulations to be too restrictive to the extent that they threaten the existence of sea salmon fishing and calls for the implementation of special measures for sea salmon fishing.

Recommendations:

1. Recognize and enhance the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples on oceans (14. A)
2. Respect and protect indigenous peoples' rights to traditional marine territories and water resources, and support their traditional occupations, including through improved market access (14.B)

Goal 17: Means of implementation (Mol)

Adequate finance and resources needs to be allocated to support targeted plans and programmes to address poverty, health, quality education and self-determined development of indigenous peoples. There is a need to ensure policy cohesion in relation to the three dimensions of the SDGs, and in ensuring the respect and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

Likewise, Global Partnerships to support the self-determined development of indigenous peoples, is urgently needed. Under the Science, Technology and Innovations (STI), the inclusion of traditional knowledge and innovations of indigenous peoples is essential. s

The Global Call to Action on Land Rights¹⁶ is a multi-stakeholder initiative with 553 organisations in 91 countries. The aim of the Call is to double the global area of land legally recognized as owned or controlled by indigenous peoples and local communities by 2020. This global partnership platform will contribute significantly to achieving several SDGs.

Likewise, the *indigenous navigator* initiative for data collection of indigenous peoples to monitor the implementation of the SDGs and the UNDRIP is another multi-stakeholder partnership. Data collected shall be used to claim indigenous peoples' rights and to pursue their self-determined development.

¹⁵ Valmaine Toki, Study on Relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the Pacific Ocean, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Feb 2016.

¹⁶ Global Call to Action on Land Rights Now: <http://www.landrightsnow.org/en/get-involved/>.

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Indigenous Peoples Major Group (IPMG) on the SDG) and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

