

"Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world"

Executive Summary:

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

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

Further, SDG implementation must overcome the failures and gaps in the implementation of the MDGs, such as lack of data-disaggregation based on ethnicity, absence of effective participation, and inappropriate programmes for poverty reduction, education and health, among others.

Particularly, gender equality and empowerment of women (Goal 5), needs to address the multidimensional discrimination and exclusion that indigenous women face due to their gender, ethnicity and economic situation. Further, their critical role and contributions in community development have to be recognized and enhanced.

Goal 9 on sustainable infrastructure and industrialization pose 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 undermined their wellbeing and resulted in impoverishment, and loss of livelihood and cultural heritage. The legacy of States and the private sector of sacrificing indigenous peoples' rights in the name of development needs to be rectified through the implementation of policies and measures that ensures free prior and informed consent, along with the respect and protection of indigenous peoples' rights to 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.

The Means of Implementation have to encompass adequate finance and resources to support targeted plans and programmes to address poverty, health, quality education and self-determination of indigenous peoples. Further, indigenous peoples must be recognized as key actors and rights holders in the context of sustainable development given their traditional knowledge and sustainable resource management practices, among others. Indigenous peoples have taken initiatives to establish partnerships, including the *Global Call to Action* for the

¹ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/indigenouspeoples/overview>

recognition of their land rights and the *Indigenous Navigator* to generate data and monitor the implementation of the SDGs and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Key recommendations:

1. Recognize indigenous peoples as distinct groups with specific rights and conditions when designing poverty reduction and food security strategies and programmes, with their effective participation
2. Ensure data disaggregation based on indigenous identity
3. Institutionalize mechanisms for the effective participation and representation of indigenous peoples in processes relating to SDGs
4. Legally recognize the customary collective land rights of indigenous peoples, and adopt indicators to monitor progress
5. Ensure that free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples is required 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 that 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 lands, territories and resources, along with the practice of their traditional occupations, sustainable resource management systems and self-governance. Their land is also the material base of their distinct identity, spirituality and culture, which are essential for their dignity and wellbeing. Thus, indigenous peoples’ perspective on being “poor” is being landless, and “prosperity” means having the security to manage and utilize their land and resources to meet their needs. The provision of basic social services such as appropriate health, education and infrastructures, and livelihood support are needed when 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; the denial 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 constitute 5% of the global population, they account for 15% of the world’s poor. As many as 33 % of all people living in extreme rural poverty globally are from indigenous communities².

Ending poverty for indigenous peoples implies addressing the legacy of social injustice, and requires a holistic and human rights-based approach that accounts for their socio-cultural specificities, and their individual and collective rights as affirmed by international human rights instrument, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Sustaining human progress: reducing vulnerabilities and building resistance, Human Development Report 2014, p. 3.

The gaps in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provide invaluable guidance for the implementation of SDGs; to ensure indigenous peoples will not again be left behind. The key gaps were:

- Lack of disaggregated data based on indigenous identifier, providing difficulties in measuring achievements and gaps;
- Non-recognition of indigenous peoples as distinct groups with specific perspectives and rights;
- Lack of meaningful participation in designing and implementing development interventions, which consequently were not culturally sensitive
- A focus on economic growth with less attention to environment and social dimensions;

It is critical that States and development actors take the lessons learned from the MDGs into account, by institutionalizing mechanisms for effective and meaningful participation of indigenous peoples, and jointly develop specific measures and programmes to reach the SDGs.

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

Goal 1: Ending poverty

A study³ conducted by the World Bank in 10 countries reported that the percentage of indigenous population living below the poverty line is much larger than for the non-indigenous population. The severe poverty condition of indigenous peoples in both developed and developing countries is manifest in insecure land and property rights, discrimination, heightened vulnerability to risk and climate change, and a wide range of health, education and other socio-economic disparities.

In the US, the poverty rate for those who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native is around 27%⁴. In Mexico, 60% of the total indigenous population lives at the lowest socioeconomic levels. In Chile, 30.8% of the indigenous population lives in multidimensional poverty (income, housing, education, and health) while the figure is 19.9% for the non-indigenous population.⁵ In Vietnam, the national poverty rate is 9.79%, but 43- 48% in many ethnic minority areas.⁶

Recommendations:

1. Recognize the distinct identities and specific conditions and rights of indigenous peoples when designing measures and programmes to address their impoverished condition in a holistic manner with their effective participation.

³ Indigenous Peoples, Poverty, and Development

<http://www.cambridge.org/9780521875886/subjects/economics/economic-development-and-growth/indigenous-peoples-poverty-and-development>

⁴ The Indigenous World 2017,

http://www.iwgia.org/iwgia_files_publications_files/0760_THE_INDIGENOUS_WORLD_2017_eb.pdf

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

2. Ensure data disaggregation based on indigenous identity, and ensure participatory monitoring.

Goal 2: Ending hunger

Poverty, caused largely by the expropriation of their lands, is a key factor of food insecurity, and the levels of hunger and malnutrition among indigenous populations are disproportionately high. Many indigenous peoples have been pushed onto the least fertile and most fragile lands, adversely affecting their food production and traditional way of life.⁷ 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 systems.

Indigenous peoples' traditional livelihood practices such as hunting, fishing, gathering, shifting cultivation, pastoralism, and high mountain agriculture continue to define their culture, identity and wellbeing in addition to providing them food security. However, indigenous peoples continue to be criminalized for these practices. Indigenous Peoples' right to food is inseparable from their rights to land, territories, resources, culture and self-determination.⁸

Target 2.3 explicitly include indigenous peoples, when calling for doubling agricultural productivity, including through secure and equal access to land. This target requires states to respect and protect the collective land rights of indigenous peoples. This will also contribute to ending poverty and increase health and wellbeing of indigenous peoples, among others.

Recommendations:

- Legally recognize and secure the customary collective land rights of indigenous peoples, and adopt a clear indicator to measure progress for target 2.3
- Protect and support the sustainable traditional occupations and livelihood practices of indigenous peoples for food security, and repeal policies against such practices
- Design programmes for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefit Arising from their Utilization with full participation of indigenous peoples
- Ensure the protection of indigenous peoples' traditional seeds

Goal 3: Health and wellbeing

There is lack of data on indigenous peoples' health and social conditions as well as lack of information, analysis, and evaluation of programmes and services to address these. A report of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues noted 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

⁷ Knuth, Lidija, The Right to adequate food and indigenous peoples, FAO, 2009

⁸ Ibid

traditional health care systems. There is also an absence of adequate health insurance or lack of economic capacity to pay for services 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.⁹ 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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹

Recommendations:

1. Develop targeted programmes with full participation of indigenous peoples, and allocate sufficient budget and appropriate personnel to ensure indigenous peoples' access to quality health services, including essential medicines and vaccines, in a non-discriminatory manner
2. Recognize and support traditional health practices of indigenous peoples
3. Design and implement specific measures in collaboration with indigenous peoples to address mental health problems, including for youth who are vulnerable to self-harm.

Goal 5: Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

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

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 In Bangladesh, there were 58 documented cases of physical and sexual abuse in 2016, and 17 rape cases.

⁹ 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>

¹⁰ The Indigenous World 2017,

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

¹¹ Ibid.

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.

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 is critical to food security, resilience and adaptation to climate change, social cohesion and peace-keeping, among others.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz has noted that: “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:

- Adopt special measures to combat discrimination, violence and harmful practices, developed and implemented with full participation of indigenous women
- Legally recognize the land rights of indigenous women including within the collectively land rights of indigenous peoples.
- Undertake legislative reforms, capacity building and support to indigenous women’s organisations to overcome discrimination and ensure land rights for women
- Develop and implement affirmative policies to ensure participation of indigenous women in decision-making processes, bodies and mechanisms

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, and industrialization despite the opposition of indigenous communities. Many projects are undertaken as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), which are often marked with conflicts, human rights violations and allegation of corruption. It is imperative that the participation of the private sector in infrastructure development ensures the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and adheres to policies for accountability and transparency of the private sector.

ASEAN plans to build the ASEAN power grid, Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline, ASEAN Highway Network, 11 hydroelectric power projects, which has started to displace indigenous peoples and local communities.¹⁴

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.¹⁵

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

¹⁴ Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Overview of the State of Indigenous Peoples in Asia, May 2014.

Recommendations:

- Institutionalize the conduct of independent human rights, environmental and social impact studies with the effective participation of affected indigenous communities
- Ensure the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples in projects with potential adverse impacts on them, along with the respect and protection of their rights to lands, territories and resources, and to self-determined development
- Adopt appropriate policies and guidelines for equitable benefit-sharing with the effective participation of indigenous peoples
- 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 water

87 million of Indigenous peoples in 83 countries rely on the oceans¹⁶, the seabed and the associated environments for their food, health, economic activities and cultural practices. Not only do they rely on the ocean for sustenance, but their relationship with the ocean is governed in accordance with their culture and management of resources.¹⁷ All activities that have a negative impact on the oceans will have similar effects on the health, lives, economies and cultures of indigenous peoples; exacerbate their already poor living conditions and life expectancy. They are now facing serious threats to their very survival due to climate change, pollution commercial fishing among others. Several islands in the Pacific are threatened to be submerged due to rising sea levels. Further, many indigenous communities are also restricted in their fishing rights, resulting to increased vulnerability to food insecurity, conflicts among others.

On the coast of Africa, huge commercial ships are starting to encroach on native fishing areas as ocean stocks diminish. In Madagascar, the stocks of community fisheries have been nearly lost.¹⁸

In Thailand, the Chao Ley (people of the sea) indigenous peoples successfully resisted the takeover of the Baron World Trade Co. Ltd. in Rawai of 5 hectares of their customary coastal land.

Recommendations:

- Recognize and enhance the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples on oceans (14.A)

¹⁵ The Indigenous World 2017,

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

¹⁶ Daryl Fears, Indigenous Peoples of the World's Coastlines are losing their Fisheries—and the way of life, The Washington Post, December 2, 2016,

¹⁷ Valmaine Toki, Study on Relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the Pacific Ocean, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Feb 2016

¹⁸ Fears, Daryl

- 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

Adequate finance and resources is needed to support targeted plans and programmes to address poverty, health, education and self-determined development of indigenous peoples. There is also a need to ensure policy cohesion in relation to indigenous peoples' rights, within the three dimensions of sustainable development. Under Science, Technology and Innovations (STI), the inclusion of traditional knowledge and innovations of indigenous peoples is essential. Under Goal 17, indigenous peoples are engaging in multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development. The *Global Call to Action on Land Rights*¹⁹ is a multi-stakeholder initiative with 553 organisations in 91 countries. The aim is to double the global area of land legally recognized as owned or controlled by indigenous peoples and local communities by 2020. Likewise, the *Indigenous Navigator*²⁰ supports data collection of indigenous peoples to monitor the implementation of the SDGs and to pursue their self-determined development. ##

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¹⁹ Global Call to Action on Land Rights Now: <http://www.landrightsnow.org/en/get-involved/>

²⁰ www.indigenousnavigator.org

