

ASIA CAUCUS STATEMENT:

AGENDA ITEM: 3 Special Theme on the MDG: Eradicating extreme Poverty and Hunger

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On behalf of the Asian indigenous Caucus, allow me to express our congratulations to your being elected as the chairperson of this year's session of the Permanent Forum.

I am pleased to inform the Permanent Forum members that the Asia Indigenous peoples organizations held a preparatory meeting in February this year for this session of the Permanent Forum. As a result, we are able to come up with an Asian submission to the Permanent Forum of which copies of these were given to members of the Permanent Forum and UN agencies yesterday.

Because of time limitation for this presentation, I will just present the main points of our concern on the MDG target on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger with additions from other indigenous organizations from Asia.

Madam chairperson, as already pointed out by others, the MDG target on eradicating poverty does not reflect on the complexities of the situation of indigenous peoples as deprived and marginalized in the process of globalization and economic dislocation. Further, indigenous peoples find themselves as victims of natural disasters such as tsunami and massive flooding, which is aggravating their already impoverished situation. Yet there has been an utter lack of attention to the plight of indigenous peoples in relation to natural disasters and on their full participation for rehabilitation and reconstruction.

As Asian indigenous peoples, we then make following recommendations in general, and the details of which are already included in the submission of Asia to the Permanent Forum.

1. In order to achieve the MDG, particularly on poverty alleviation and eradication, we strongly recommend the mainstreaming of indigenous peoples' issues and the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights by governments and the UN system, particularly the UN agencies including UN country offices. The goal of this recommendation is to develop awareness and sensitivity on indigenous issues and concerns; and to empower communities to participate in all processes at the local, national and international levels with regard to programmes, projects and plans of action concerning poverty alleviation.

Indigenous peoples should have full participation in the drafting and the implementation process of the PRSP and should be clearly recognized in PRSP documents;

Rights to indigenous land, forest and natural resources should be clearly identified in the PRSP documents, the role of indigenous peoples specified, and control over traditional land, forest, natural resources and decision on the type of development by indigenous peoples acknowledged

PRSPs should include an indigenous perspective of poverty, and follow a rights-based approach, recognizing indigenous peoples' claim for collective rights as distinct peoples

3. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) should recommend that UN agencies, governments, multilateral financial institutions and other intergovernmental organizations to allocate sufficient funds for capacity building of indigenous peoples to ensure that they can contribute their perspectives on poverty reduction in the planning, design, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes.

4. The PFII should, in close cooperation with indigenous peoples, develop poverty indicators based on indigenous peoples own perception of their situation and experiences.

5. The PFII should request the UNDP and other agencies to ensure consultation with indigenous peoples in the preparation of the CCN and CCS and other programmes under the UNDAF programme.

6. The PFII should request the Inter-Agency Support Group and all other agencies to undertake specific programmes and activities to increase capacity and awareness among their staff at the national level on indigenous peoples' rights.

7. The PFII recommend to governments, UN agencies, interregional governmental organizations, and inter-support groups that all of their programmes and grants should not only focus on functional changes but also address and emphasize on structural changes particularly where oppression and human rights violations against indigenous peoples by States, lest the assistance is abused to commit more violations.

8. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to urge the UN agencies and governments to fully involve indigenous peoples in post-natural disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation processes and extend all necessary support and assistance to devastated indigenous communities.

9. The PFII to strongly recommend the governments to honour and respect all kinds of agreements and treaties made between indigenous peoples and governments and for their full and speedy implementation in order to avoid more conflicts.

Thank you madam chair.