

First Preparatory Committee Meeting (Prep-Com 1) of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD)  
17-19 May 2010  
UN, New York  
Session 2: A Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication

STATEMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
18 May 2010

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair

Indigenous peoples believe that all these talk of a Green Economy should not distract us from addressing the root causes of the global economic and ecological crisis. There are numerous agreements reached in multilateral processes which already conceptualized and defined sustainable development. The problem is that many of these agreements have not been effectively implemented. So we appeal to all the States here to focus on how to address the implementation gap and do what needs to be done. Maybe what we should talk about is what should the roles played by States, the market, the UN and other multilateral bodies, the civil society and indigenous peoples in addressing the gap and implementing sustainable development. How do we get States to comply with their obligations to international environmental, financial and human rights agreements which have been the results of UN meetings for the past 50 years?

Two weeks ago the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which dealt with the theme “Indigenous Peoples' Development with Culture and Identity”, concluded and there were many concrete recommendations relevant to the discussions in this room.

Development, whether it is called green or sustainable, should be holistic as the G77 and China statement reiterated yesterday. Holism means integrating all the dimensions of development which include economic, social, political, ecological, cultural and spiritual considerations. When we say development with culture and identity, we mean that development should be underpinned by values of indigenous peoples such as interconnectedness, sustainability, equilibrium, reciprocity, equity, harmony with nature and solidarity. We cannot separate development from the protection and respect of our rights to self-determination, to our lands, territories and resources, our cultural rights, rights, right to free, prior and informed consent and our traditional knowledge, among others. These rights are contained in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. If States and the UN promote and respect this Declaration, sustainable development can become a reality. Thus, we strongly believe that the ecosystem and human-rights based approach to development should be reaffirmed by the UN Conference on Sustainable Development. We also believe that Mother Earth or nature has rights which we human beings should respect. Efforts in promoting Mother Earth rights should be supported.

We have the smallest ecological footprints because of our sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods and because we fought and continue to fight against the degradation and destruction of our ecosystems which are the basis of our cultures and identities. We are already living, practicing and operationalizing sustainable development but the obstacles and challenges we face are tremendous. This includes the unfettered and unregulated behavior of the market, including financial markets. Corporate accountability and the regulation of the market are crucial for a new paradigm for development. Indigenous peoples are now articulating and strengthening their various concepts and practices of living well and development, such as *sumak kawsay*, *suma qamaña*, *laman laka*, *gawis ay biag*, among others. These are our contributions to bring about the needed changes to make our planet really green and sustainable. Thank you.