



“No More Promises, a Call for Action”

Statement Millennium Development Goals, Women, and Indigenous Peoples

2010

Acknowledging that United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted on 13 September 2007 by the General Assembly affirms that we, as indigenous peoples, have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising our right to development¹.

Reaffirming that States should, in accordance with international law, take concerted positive steps to ensure respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples on the basis of equality and non-discrimination and recognize the value and diversity of their distinctive identities, cultures and forms of social organization.

Recognizing that focusing on the inequalities faced by indigenous peoples still remains as a key challenge to the Millennium Development Goals. In fact, the MDGs do not directly address nor do they mention indigenous peoples, even though they have historically faced social exclusion and marginalization.

Endorsing the resolution 49/7 “Indigenous women beyond the ten-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action” adopted at the 49th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Convinced that indigenous peoples have the right to benefit from the Millennium Development Goals and from other goals and aspirations contained in the Millennium Declaration to the same extent as all others.

Taking note that the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has expressed its concern that, unless the particular situation of indigenous peoples are adequately taken into account, some Millennium Development Goals' processes may lead to accelerated loss of lands and natural resources. Moreover, it will lead to Indigenous Peoples' loss of their means of subsistence and their displacement, as well as accelerated assimilation and erosion of their culture. The Forum therefore has called for the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in designing, implementing and monitoring MDG-related programmes and projects that concern or affect them².

Considering that the situation of indigenous peoples is not always reflected in statistics or is hidden by national averages. Nevertheless, there are studies that demonstrate that high levels of maternal death, illiteracy, malnutrition, and violations of fundamental human rights occur in indigenous regions of different countries. These priorities mostly affect indigenous women, gender inequality, lack of economic autonomy, and violence due to structural realities that have yet to change,

Given the fact that the time frame for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals is the same as that of the Programme of Action for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples³,

Reiterating that the MDGs cannot be fulfilled without the full participation and empowerment of women, particularly indigenous women, and the respect of their human rights, it is necessary to create and make available more opportunities for the exercise of their sexual and reproductive rights, the universal access to sexual, reproductive, and maternal health,

Valuing the efforts of working with other United Nations Agencies, federal, state and local governments, civil society organizations, academic institutions, networks of indigenous peoples, women, and youth,

Emphasizing the lack of public policies that include the participation of women and indigenous peoples, better allocation of funds and better distribution of specific budgets, improvement of legislation that includes the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples and of women in accordance with international standards, implementation of urgent actions that promote the empowerment of women, to guarantee secular states, and to change the global economy that contradicts the spirit of the MDGs,

Learning of the models of intercultural services for the human rights of indigenous women it is necessary to improve the recognition and respect for the traditional medicine of the indigenous peoples, the roles of midwives, the indigenous cosmovision, to empower indigenous women leaders to eliminate the gaps of economic, social, cultural, civil, and political inequalities in the countries, to guarantee the participation in coordinated actions through free, prior and informed consent assuring consultations

with the necessary resources for a better understanding between governments, women, and indigenous peoples in matters that concern them.

Believing that now is not the time of promises but of actions against gender violence, structural discrimination, and the exclusion of sectors and actors that should be included in order to achieve the MDGs.

We urge the inclusion of the following paragraphs in the MDGs 2010 Summit outcome document:

“We recognize that states need to give priority to the situation of indigenous peoples by implementing specific methods of inclusion into the development processes, and redefining approaches to the implementation of the MDGs so as to include their perspectives, concerns, experiences and world views. Some areas of particular concern are disaggregation of data, inter-cultural/bilingual education, and the guarantee of access to culturally sensitive sexual, reproductive, maternal and child healthcare.”

“We call States and the UN System to make greater efforts to promote the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples with the greater participation of women, in designing, implementing and monitoring MDG-related programmes and policies that concern them or may affect them.”

“We recognize indigenous peoples as distinct peoples and we reaffirm that respect for their individual and collective human rights is crucial for achieving a just and sustainable solution to the widespread poverty that affects them.”

“We recognize the unique contributions made by indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women, to the efforts made by the States to achieving MDGs by promoting sustainable and equitable development and proper management of natural resources.”

“We recognize that indigenous peoples have fewer opportunities for participation and fewer benefits than other segments of the population, and are lagging behind other segments of the population in the achievement of the MDGs in most, if not all, the countries in which they live. Indigenous women commonly face additional gender-based disadvantages and discrimination.”

“We note with concern that indigenous peoples are disproportionately represented among the poor and extremely poor, their levels of access to adequate health and education services are well below national averages, and they are especially vulnerable to the consequences of climate change and environmental degradation.”