

## **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF THE HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLPF) OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2017**

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### **GENERAL OBSERVATION ON THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION:**

A **Ministerial Declaration** is one of the main outcomes of the annual High Level Political Forum (HLPF) as the global Follow Up and Review (FUR) process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015. This negotiated agreement by UN member-States aims to provide further guidance and actions in the implementation of the SDGs.

In general, the Ministerial Declaration of the HLPF held in July 2017 is largely a reiteration of the commitments already made by States in the Political Declaration “Transforming the World” known as 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It lacks decisive actions and guidance to implement the SDGs in order to achieve the Goals and Targets. Global actions are needed to address structural barriers, policy cohesion requiring strategic political and economic reforms and transformation to achieve the SDGs and ensuring “no one is left behind”. It also requires actions for a balanced implementation of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of the SDGs. The political will of many States remains weak in putting into actions the commitments made under the 2030 Development Agenda such as the respect and protection of human rights, achieving equality, social justice and non-discrimination, transparency and accountability, among others. Further, the main development strategies and plans are still largely “business as usual” approach to development instead of transformative, as evidenced in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) of 43 States.

### **REFERENCE TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES:**

The Ministerial Declaration of the HLPF 2017 made four (4) references to indigenous peoples, compared to only one in 2016. One of the references to indigenous peoples is more of a reiteration of the Political Declaration of the Agenda 2030 in terms of the need to empower marginalized sectors including indigenous peoples. This is the same with the one in the Ministerial Declaration of 2016 and included in the zero draft of the Ministerial Declaration 2017. The other three references to indigenous peoples are more specific and inclusive in the implementation of the SDGs. This inclusion can be attributed to the submission and interventions of the Indigenous Peoples Major Group (IPMG) and supported by States and other Major Groups during the consultation process on the Ministerial Declaration. One is the inclusion of indigenous peoples in appropriate national plans and measures to implement social protection systems including social protection floors. This is very important for indigenous peoples as they are largely excluded in national consultation processes and their conditions are not accounted for in existing social protection systems as a distinct group needing appropriate measures such as on the protection of their sustainable livelihoods and access to basic social services.

The other reference to indigenous peoples is the acknowledgement of their extreme vulnerability to climate change and land degradation. While this is highly relevant, it falls short of the actions needed to protect their lands, territories and resources to halt the worsening land resource expropriation and to address the impacts of climate change. The proposal of the indigenous peoples and their allies for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration was related to securing land rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. This was however reformulated and weakened in the Final Ministerial Declaration. This response demonstrates the continuing lack of political will of States to take clear actions in relation to their commitments under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) particularly on the respect, recognition and protection of the lands, territories and resources of indigenous peoples, which is imperative for “leaving no one behind” in achieving the SDGs.

The last but not the least inclusion of indigenous peoples is on the need to reach out to them in the context of the “need to take actions towards localizing and communicating the Sustainable Development Goals.” Majority of indigenous peoples worldwide are not aware of the SDGs because of language barriers, geographic location and lack of access to communication technology, among others. Further, consultations and information-dissemination of many States in relation to SDGs are largely concentrated in the capital cities and urban areas. It is thereby urgent for States and other development actors to conduct wide-scale and appropriate awareness-raising activities on the SDGs to indigenous peoples where they are located in both developed and developing countries. The IPMG has been exerting its utmost efforts to inform indigenous peoples on the SDGs, including the implications to them but this remains limited due to lack of resources.

The inclusion of the indigenous peoples in the 2017 Ministerial Declaration significantly contributes to their further visibility and putting more attention to them in the implementation of the SDGs. Further, indigenous peoples can use the Ministerial Declaration to follow up and advocate for its immediate implementation by governments and other key development actors at all levels such as those engaged in social protection, climate change and awareness-raising outreach on the SDGs

Additionally, the Ministerial Declaration also reiterated the need for data disaggregation by ethnicity, which is critical for indigenous peoples to be visible in monitoring the achievements and gaps in the implementation of the SDGs.

While indigenous peoples made advances in the 2017 Ministerial Declaration, it is important to emphasize that much more work needs to be done at the national and local levels where positive and transformational changes are urgently needed for indigenous peoples to realize their self-determined development and to achieve sustainable development for all. ###

The proposals of the IPMG on the draft of the Ministerial Declaration and Statements made during the HLPD can be found in the website of the IPMG [www.indigenouspeoples-sdg.org](http://www.indigenouspeoples-sdg.org) :

## MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF THE HLPF 2017 WITH REFERENCE TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

*Recognize that eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity require collective and transformative efforts, putting the furthest behind first and adapting institutions and policies to take into account the multidimensional nature of poverty and the inherent interlinkages between different goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. People who are vulnerable must be empowered. Those whose needs are reflected in the 2030 Agenda include all children, adolescents, youth, persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80 per cent live in poverty), people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, **indigenous peoples**, refugees and internally displaced persons, migrants and peoples living in areas affected by complex humanitarian emergencies, and peoples in areas affected by terrorism and conflict. We stress that collective action can promote policy integration, facilitate inclusive partnerships and provide support for poverty eradication;*

*We stress the importance of taking targeted measures to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, and of implementing nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including social protection floors, based on national priorities, paying particular attention to women, children, older persons, **indigenous peoples** and persons with disabilities. We note the need for countries, the United Nations development system and all relevant stakeholders to ensure and promote a multidimensional approach in their work and efforts to eradicate poverty;*

*Note with concern that poverty remains a principal cause of hunger and that an estimated 793 million people are still undernourished globally, 155 million children are stunted, and other forms of malnutrition are rising. Climate change and land degradation are increasing the vulnerability to extreme weather events of small-scale food producers, in particular women, **indigenous peoples**, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers. Resilient, sustainable and inclusive food systems that protect, enhance and restore natural resources, sustain rural and urban livelihoods, and provide access to nutritious foods from smallholder producers must be at the heart of efforts to simultaneously eradicate poverty and hunger, ensure adequate nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture and achieve prosperity.*

*Emphasize the need to take appropriate action towards localizing and communicating the Sustainable Development Goals at all levels, from the national to the community and grassroots level. In this vein, there can be no effective implementation, or accountability to our citizens, where no awareness exists. Efforts should be made to reach out to all stakeholders, including sub-national and local authorities, **indigenous peoples**, persons with disabilities, civil society, business, the private sector, the media, parliamentarians, and the scientific and academic communities;”*

NOTE: the proposals of the IPMG on the zero draft of the Ministerial Declaration and statements made during the HLPD can be found in the website of the IPMG [www.indigenouspeoples-sdg.org](http://www.indigenouspeoples-sdg.org)