

2018 High-Level Political Forum
Implementing the 2030 Agenda for resilient societies
Monday July 9, 2018
Sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG 6)
3:00 PM- 6:00 PM Conference room 4
UN Headquarters, New York

Statement of the Indigenous Peoples Major Group (IPMG) –

Unsustainable development practices such as excessive extraction, diversion and damming of major water systems, have disproportionately impacted Indigenous peoples. Often times these activities are facilitated by the forced displacement of Indigenous Peoples, and the loss of ecological habitats important for their resilient economies and lifeways. Industrial pollution of watersheds threaten, or have already destroyed, what remains of water resources within Indigenous lands and territories; in many cases carrying intergenerational impacts as exposure to contaminated water affects the reproductive health of Indigenous women. These activities result in the continued cultural, physical and ethnic genocide of Indigenous Peoples. As such, Indigenous Peoples around the globe continue to find their communities on the frontlines in the struggle for access to, and protection of, clean drinking water, while also leading in the development of integrated and holistic management of finite freshwater ecosystems to foster sustainable and resilient societies.

1. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) Article 1, paragraph 2 states that a people may not be “deprived of its means of subsistence” and that this right imposes on states the duty to ensure “that there is adequate access to water for subsistence farming and for securing the livelihoods of indigenous peoples.”; and,
2. ICESCR also declared that “water should be treated as a social and cultural good, and not primarily as an economic good. The manner of the realization of the right to water must also be sustainable, ensuring that the right can be realized for present and future generations”, and that states should ensure that “Indigenous peoples’ access to water resources on their ancestral lands is protected from encroachment and unlawful pollution. States should provide resources for indigenous peoples to design, deliver, and control their access to water”; and,
3. Even though states continue to measure their progress towards meeting goal 6, Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives of water and management practices differ greatly, and the cultural significance of water remains unrecognized in the development

and implementation of water law and policy; in addition, rights to water for economic development and use are nearly non-existent for Indigenous Peoples as they remain disproportionately affected by poor access to water and sanitation services

We offer the following recommendations:

1. The full recognition, protection and implementation of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to their water resources as the role of Indigenous Peoples in equitable and sustainable water management is essential for meeting SDG goal 6; and,
2. Modification of the Evaluation of countries' identified procedures in engaging stakeholders and local communities to include evaluation of protocols to ensure the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples to facilitate meaningful participation, especially of women and youth in planning projects and/or programs relating to water management, use and conservation; and
3. The recognition, protection and promotion of the holistic and sustainable water management practices of indigenous peoples, including traditional knowledge systems which take into account environment, social and cultural dimensions for holistic and cohesive and participatory policy development; and,
4. Official Development Assistance (ODA) included tracking investment in Indigenous-led integrated water management projects and that restrictions on ODA investments in developed nations be lifted to allow access for Indigenous Peoples facing the same conditions as those in so-called "developing" nations.