

## **Statement on Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth Indigenous Peoples Major Group (IPMG)**

Governments' current economic priorities and policies being implemented with "business as usual" approach is adversely affecting decent work of indigenous peoples and are getting marginalized further.

For IPs, decent work implies recognition of our sustainable traditional occupation practices such as farming, seed preservation, shifting cultivation, hunting, fishing and transmission of indigenous knowledge, etc. These occupations contribute to enriching their livelihood security, cultural diversity, strengthening social relations and institutions. Therefore, their traditional occupation is an integral part of their identity and dignity which needs to be protected and integrated in the implementation of the SDGs with the pledge of leaving no one behind.

There are number of factors hindering or putting pressure in the protection and promotion of traditional occupations and some of these are:

- Government laws and regulations in various countries that are aimed at preventing or phasing out traditional occupations such as shifting cultivation and thereby criminalizing these activities.
- The economic growth targets and programmes are posing greater threat to our decent life and work as it further undermines our rights and traditional occupations. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) investment plans are focused on dams and extractive industries such as large-scale mining, which are mostly located in indigenous peoples' territories. The infrastructure development plans include more than 100 large hydropower dams and major highways for ASEAN connectivity. These projects are causing conflicts resulting from displacements and outright disregard for indigenous peoples' rights to their lands, territories and resources.
- Corporate agribusiness expansion plans for oil palm, corn production and sugar plantations are resulting in land grabbing and devastation of the economic base of indigenous peoples at a large-scale in many countries.

Further, the main targets for various "economic growth," projects are in indigenous territories, but they have the least access to basic social services such as education and health services, etc.

It is important to note that, much evidence indicates that our traditional occupations include sustainable food systems and agro-ecological farming approaches that combine indigenous knowledge with multi-disciplinary science offer sustainable solutions to the problems of environment and healthy food.

**We Recommend the following:**

- Ensure legal recognition of indigenous peoples' lands, territories and resources and their traditional occupations.
- Stop criminalization and fully protect traditional occupations as decent work, including providing appropriate basic social services.
- Ensure the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of indigenous peoples regarding economic growth projects, plans and programmes affecting them.