

STATEMENT OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MAJOR GROUP

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Infrastructure projects are major drivers in the transformation of lands, waters and territories of indigenous peoples in developed and developing countries. These unjust transfers of customary lands and of resources are often marred by conflicts, gross human rights violations, and killing of human rights and environmental defenders. Bertha Caceres in Honduras, a leader of the Lenca peoples against Central America's biggest hydropower dams exemplifies the grim reality that 40% of land and environment defenders killed in 2015 are from indigenous communities, as revealed by a Global Witness report.

Mostly undertaken as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), these contracts for infrastructure development ignore the necessary social and community partnerships, which is the third pillar of sustainable development. It is alarming that the Association of South East Asia Nations- ASEAN plans to build the ASEAN power grid, Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline, ASEAN Highway Network, and 11 hydroelectric power projects, which has started to displace indigenous peoples and local communities.

Even in North America, pipelines and resource extraction projects come at the expense of the territorial integrity, economic and environmental sustainability, and health and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples. These projects often threaten our sacred water and ecosystems vital for mitigating and adapting to climate change, and are pushed through despite treaty violations and the unjust use of militarized domestic police forces in violation of standing treaties and the "free prior and informed consent" of Indigenous Peoples.

We thereby recommend to States and the private sector to:

1. Institutionalize the full and effective participation of affected Indigenous communities in conducting independent human rights, environmental and impact studies
2. Ensure the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples in projects with potential adverse impacts on us, along with the respect and protection of our right to lands, territories and resources, and to self-determined development
3. Adopt appropriate policies and guidelines for equitable benefit-sharing, accountability and transparency of States and the private sector in infrastructure development.
4. Establish effective grievance mechanisms for indigenous peoples and ensure the protection land and environment rights defenders