



BRIEFING NOTE

INSIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN OF ASIA ON THE CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTION.

ORGANIZATIONS: Network of Indigenous Women in Asia (NIWA) and Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)
EVENT DATE: 27 th April 2021

1. BACKGROUND

This year's theme of the United Nations Permanent Forum Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) was to highlight the role of Indigenous Peoples in implementing Sustainable Development Goal 16, which is about "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions". It envisions promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, enhances access to justice, and builds effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. It has 12 targets aiming to reduce violence, crime, trafficking, corruption through enhancement of inclusive decision-making bodies, non-discriminatory laws and policies, access to justice and information, and establishing accountable and transparent institutions.

Indigenous communities have been continuously advocating for their rights, human rights, and recognitions against the violation due to the discriminatory laws, policies and measures, ancestral land grabbing, legal unrecognition of Indigenous Peoples, militarization, violence, trafficking, red-tagging, vilification, and limited access, participation and representation at decision-making spheres. Such violations have gendered impacts on Indigenous Women and girls. The SDG goal 16 aims to address these gaps and barriers ensuring the protection of IPs' rights, access to justice, and enhancing inclusion.

With the joint efforts among different key actors, the Indigenous Women's movements in Asia have strengthened in the last years. There has been an increase in the inclusion of the Indigenous Women's perspectives in the national, regional, and global decision-making platforms due to continuous movements and joint efforts of Indigenous Women. The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development has offered the opportunity to promote the rights and welfare of Indigenous Peoples. Despite the international recognition of Indigenous Women's equal rights, multifaceted challenges remain. With the unending situation of the global pandemic Covid-19, these challenges are more pronounced leading the Indigenous Women's rights to lands, territories, natural resources, socioeconomic security, cultural identity, and language at a greater risk than before.

Therefore, the Network of Indigenous Women in Asia (NIWA) with the technical support of Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) took the opportunity to organize one side event in the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in 2021 to bring in perspectives of Indigenous Women in Asia in implementing the SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. It aimed at unfolding the challenges and issues of Indigenous Women and reflecting on their participation and representation in the decision-making at all levels, their access to information, and fundamental freedom and entitlement to a legal identity.

The virtual event was conducted with 3 panelists, namely Ms. Kakay Tolentino from the Philippines, Ms. Maslah Rompado from Malaysia, and Ms. Seangrawee Suweerakan from Thailand, and 2 keynote speakers, Ms. Jannie Lasimbang from Malaysia and Ms. Eufemat Cullemat from the Philippines. The speakers highlighted the status, roles and challenges faced by Indigenous Women in their countries. The Keynote speakers shared their insights and recommendations to the Indigenous Women Organizations, UN bodies, and the governments to accelerate Indigenous Women's advancement in achieving SDG targets. The event was attended by 60 participants. The event also served as a sharing platform for the participants, where questions on the involvement of Indigenous Women and People with Disabilities were discussed.

This briefing note reviews the deliberations during the event on the challenges of Indigenous Women to implement SDG 16. inclusion.

2. OPENING REMARKS:

Mr. Gam A Shimray, Secretary General of AIPP, opened the virtual event where he highlighted the importance of the SDG process in a human rights-based approach. He also encouraged Indigenous Peoples to set their own vision to make the best use of SDG foreseeing beyond 2030. He called attention to the transformative changes, which have to take place at multiple levels for global transformation and pluralistic approaches yet to be adopted. He expressed that the implementation of SDG 16 has to be on that basis for it to be democratic and inclusive of the grassroots community. He closed his remarks stating that NIWA has integrated dynamism and empowered indigenous movements.

3. MESSAGE FROM THE PANELISTS

SDG 16.7 Ensure Responsive, Inclusive, Participatory and Representative Decision-Making At All Levels

“CHALLENGES THAT THE INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN MALAYSIA FACE TO IMPLEMENT SDG 16”

Ms. Maslah Rompado, Secretary General of JOAS (Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia) presented the challenges faced in the implementation of SDG 16 in Malaysia. She shared that systemic barrier is one of the huge challenges for the implementation of SDG 16, where women are regarded as third-class citizens under the patriarchal system that hinders their equal participation in decision-making. She claimed that the provision of 30% women in decision-making is not appropriate as per the women population. She highlighted that the recent study has shown less than 18% of women in the decision-making body. She stated that Indigenous Peoples in Malaysia are marginalized and are the poorest among the poor. She outlined the challenges of Indigenous Peoples in the context of the implementation of SDG due to exclusion of IPs in localization and implementation of the SDG processes.



CHALLENGES OF THE INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN MALAYSIA FACE TO IMPLEMENT SDG

SDG 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

“ATTACKS ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: DEFENDERS OF LAND”

Ms. Kakay Tolentino, National Coordinator of Bai Indigenous Women Network from the Philippines shared Indigenous Women’s challenges in implementing SDG 16. She highlighted that the National Security policy and militarization of the Philippines has violated the human and Indigenous rights of Indigenous Peoples. She also underlined that Indigenous Peoples’ lands and territories are captured and exploited to launch extractive projects violating land rights and self-determination. She stressed that Indigenous Women human rights defenders and Indigenous organizations are under the threat of red-tagging and vilification. Thus, Indigenous Women are struggling to defend their rights to land and self-determination.

SIDE EVENT FOR UNPFII 2021

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS; THE STRUGGLES OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16

THE SIDE EVENT WILL SERVE AS THE MUCH NEEDED PLATFORM FOR THE INDIGENOUS WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS TO REPRESENT THEIR COMMUNITIES, SPEAK UP ABOUT THEIR STRUGGLES AND DEMAND ACTION FOR THE BETTER IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16.

EVENT DATE: 27TH APRIL 2021, 6 PM BKK TIME

**Attacks on Indigenous Peoples:
Defenders of Land**

**DU2021 Pandemonic: Wreaking Havoc on
the Land and Life of Indigenous Womens**

Bai
Bai Indigenous Women Network

SDG 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

“INDIGENOUS WOMEN’S ISSUES IN THAILAND”

Ms. Seangrawee Suweerakan, Project Coordinator of Indigenous Women Network of Thailand (IWNT) shared the issues of Indigenous Women in implementing SDGs in Thailand. She stated that Indigenous Women’s main issues are domestic violence, land and water rights, access to health services, and citizenship in Thailand. She also highlighted that the increased number of Indigenous Peoples without legal citizenship is due to geographic remoteness, language barriers, corrupted system and financial constraints. She pointed out that IPs not having citizenship are barred from accessing health and financial services, participation in politics, ownership over the lands and are easily exploited everywhere.



4. KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Ms. Jannie Lasimbang, a Kapayan Sabah Assembly woman, was one of the keynote speakers who highlighted her insights on the roles and contributions of Indigenous Women on the global development agenda and her prediction on the change in context in the next five years. She stated that Indigenous Women's roles have now become much active and appreciated at the regional and international levels in an organized manner. She also highlighted that Indigenous Women along with their continuous struggles and consolidated efforts have stepped up building strong institutions. Her prediction for the next five years was that it would still be challenging for Indigenous Peoples in general and Indigenous Women in particular due to the persistence of discriminatory national policies, violence, corruption, bribery, lack of legislation, and militarization. She also shared that COVID-19 has hindered the implementation of SDGs and a few states have violated the human rights of Indigenous communities during COVID-19 pandemics. She remarked that it is the primary role of the states and the United Nations to achieve the global development agenda and also shared that the United Nations have to step up in case states fail in its implementation.

Ms. Eufemia Cullemat, House Representative of Quezon City, presented her recommendations to Indigenous Women to address the gaps and accelerate the implementation of SDG 16. She expressed that there is a need for consultation with the grassroots communities on the implementation of SDG 16 and coming up with collective actions to address the challenges. She also emphasized the necessity of strong people's organizations to launch advocacy campaigns, lobby on the legislative agenda, and watch on accountability of the government in the implementation of SDGs. She shared that for Indigenous Women, being the primary victims of discrimination, their participation is essential for building an inclusive society and strong representation of Indigenous Women in decision-making.

5. KEY ISSUES:

Violation of Indigenous Peoples' rights and human rights in all the representing countries.

Discriminatory national laws and policies at the national and local levels.

Limited representation and participation of Indigenous Women in decision-making bodies and mechanisms at the local and national levels.

Lack of legal recognition and identity of Indigenous Peoples.

Lack of inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Women in the SDG process, its localization and implementation at all levels.

Reoccurring violence, criminalization, militarization, red-tagging, and vilification against Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Women.

Intrusion on the fundamental freedom of IPs and right to self-determination.

Violation of Indigenous Peoples' rights to lands, territories, and resources.

Enhanced inequality, discrimination, criminalization, marginalization, and exclusion of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Women and girls in particular amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

State:

The States must ensure gender equality to develop an inclusive social protection system and enhance the representation of women in all possible forms at all levels.

The States should develop and implement gender transformative policies to support, and focus on disaggregated data collection.

States should make all efforts to end all the violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights and violence against Indigenous Women and girls.

The States should simplify the administrative process, enhance enabling environment and budget considering the language barriers of Indigenous Peoples.

The States should provide citizenship and legal recognition to the Indigenous Peoples including Indigenous Women.

UN Bodies:

The UN bodies should focus on investigating the human rights situation in the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar and support their campaigns.

The United Nations should provide necessary support to the states for the effective implementation of SDGs as appropriate. The UN must step in, in the case of the state's failure in the implementation of SDG 16 and other relevant processes and mechanisms.

The United Nations should provide necessary technical and financial supports to Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Women and Indigenous Women with disabilities to build the capacities and solidarity among themselves as appropriate.

Civil Society Organizations:

Civil society organizations need consultations with the grassroots communities including Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Women on the implementation of SDG 16 and come up with collective actions to address the general and specific challenges.

Indigenous Peoples' organizations and Indigenous Women's organizations should work collectively to launch the advocacy campaigns, lobby the legislative agenda, and watch on the

7. CLOSING REMARKS:

Shree Maharjan, Deputy Secretary General of AIPP closed the event welcoming continuous solidarity and stressing the importance to address the discrimination and marginalization of Indigenous Women. He closed off the session by extending his gratitude to the panelists, keynote speakers, the moderator, NIWA members, and all the participants for their active participation and contributions to make this event successful. He, further, emphasized the necessity of continuous collaboration and supports among Indigenous Peoples' organizations and Indigenous Women's organizations in the future to amplify the voices and concerns of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Women.