

High Level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples
September 22 - 23, 2014, UN Headquarters, New York
Interactive Panel on the UN Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals
Statement by the International Indian Treaty Council presented by Andrea Carmen

Thank you Madame Co-Chair and respectful greetings to all delegations.

One of the most important, and in fact essential elements of the WCIP Outcome Document is its firm and unqualified commitment in paragraph 4 to “respect, promote and advance and in no way diminish the rights of Indigenous Peoples and to uphold the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”. Paragraphs 3 and 20 further reaffirm the commitment of States to obtain Free Prior and Informed Consent before adopting administrative and legislative measures and prior to the approval of projects affecting Indigenous lands and resources.

We interpret yesterday’s adoption as a commitment made in good faith by the General Assembly member States to include the rights, concerns and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples in the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals Outcome Document they will adopt next year.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the international minimum standard for the survival, dignity and well-being of the world’s Indigenous Peoples. Imagine our shock and dismay when what started out as several references to Indigenous Peoples as Peoples in the first versions of the Zero Draft outcome document from the UN Open Working Group on the SDG’s Goals were totally deleted by the time the June 30th draft was presented for debate at the 13th and final session in July of this year. That text used the much-diminished term “Indigenous and local communities” only one time, and made no reference to Indigenous Peoples at all.

We had hoped to focus in the final OWG session on the inclusion of key priorities for Indigenous Peoples in the Post 2015 sustainable development agenda. These included culture as the 4th pillar of sustainable development and provisions to safeguard rights to lands and resources, food sovereignty, Treaty rights and Free Prior and Informed Consent. Instead our basic and fundamental recognition as Peoples in the text remained in question into the final hours of that session.

Indigenous Peoples were finally included in just two paragraphs of the Zero Draft pertaining to food security and education. The core issues of rights to land and resources, self-determination and Free Prior and Informed Consent were watered down or completely eliminated.

As one of the three global organizing partners for the Indigenous Peoples Major Group for the Post 2015 SDG's, the International Indian Treaty Council is encouraged that the commitment made unanimously by States yesterday also signifies a commitment to rectify these significant omissions, beginning with the reinstatement of FPIC, in the Zero Draft outcome document.

In conclusion, the IITC endorses the proposal by Chief Arvol Lookinghorse for the recognition of June 21st 2015 to be declared International World Peace and Prayer/Honor Sacred Sites Day for the survival of Mother Earth and our future generations, in recognition of the fundamental spiritual basis of our relationship as Indigenous Peoples with the issues being discussed here today.

Thank you.