

ECOSOC High-Level Session

Theme: Supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities.

UN Trusteeship Council, 19 July 2018

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Respectful Greetings and thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address this body on the theme of today's session "Supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities." The International Indian Treaty Council is an ECOSOC accredited NGO in General Consultative Status and a co-convener of the Indigenous Peoples Major Group.

Indigenous Peoples around the world are often linked to both sustainability and resilience and have much to share and contribute to this conversation at the global, national and local level. The Traditional Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, for instance, is well recognized as critical in efforts to address the global climate crises. About 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity is found within our territories, yet Indigenous Peoples represent 15 percent of the world's extreme poor while making up 5% of the global population.

Our resilience finds its roots within our ways of knowing through many generations of observation and a respectful inter-relationship with the lands, territories, waters, plants and animals and other natural resources which have always sustained us. It is also based with our sheer will to survive the ongoing, brutal and intergenerational violations of our most basic human rights by external forces who continue to covet these same lands, territories, and resources. Climate change and economic globalization add additional pressures on Indigenous Peoples, especially from resource intensive and extractive industries, which in many cases lead to large-scale displacement, loss of livelihoods, environmental contamination and food insecurities.

It is clear that in order to support the sustainability and resilience of Indigenous Peoples, States must fulfill their obligations to recognize and respect our human rights and fundamental freedoms, including our right to self-determination and other rights affirmed in The UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Declaration on the Right to Development.

Broader development processes must not negatively affect Indigenous Peoples' rights. States must ensure that the benefits of mutually-agreed development programmes are equitably distributed and target the reduction of inequalities, as well as monitor the achievement of the SDGs through the collection of disaggregated data in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples concerned.

Finally, to support our sustainability and resilience, States must also obtain the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous People before implementing development projects that will affect our rights, territories or ways of life.

In closing Mr. President, the resilience of Indigenous Peoples does not absolve States from their solemn commitment to respect our human rights as the universal, inherent nature of these rights and freedoms are beyond question.

Thank you.