



United Nations Human Rights Council, 45th Session`

14 September to 6 October 2020

Agenda Items 3 and 5: Interactive dialogue with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 24 September 2020

Intervention by the International Indian Treaty Council, presented by Andrea Carmen

The IITC thanks the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Victoria Tauli-Corpuz for her many contributions and welcomes with enthusiasm the new mandate holder Jose Francisco Cali Tzay. He stepped into this role on May 30th during the raging COVID-19 pandemic which became, out of dire necessity, the focus of his first study and report to this Council.

It underscores the interrelated reasons for Indigenous Peoples' disproportionate vulnerabilities including lack of access to health services, infrastructure and clean water; chronic health impacts of environmental contamination and imposed development; racism and poverty; and lack of participation in decision-making for emergency response measures. Although lack of disaggregated data masks the true extent of our losses, we are witnessing the passing of many members of our families, communities, organizations and Peoples, including leaders, elders, language speakers and knowledge holders, with devastating intergenerational impacts.

In addition, some States are taking advantage of this crisis to expand imposed development and resource extraction and increase repression of Indigenous human rights defenders. We urge the Council members to fully implement the Special Rapporteurs' recommendations to uphold the rights, support resiliency and protect the lives of Indigenous Peoples, now and in the future.

Thank you.