

**BACKGROUND NOTE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
SYSTEM WIDE ACTION PLAN TO ENSURE A COHERENT
APPROACH TO ACHIEVING THE ENDS OF THE UNITED
NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES**

Background Note 11

Indigenous Peoples and the Post 2015 Development Agenda

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(DSPD/UN-DESA) July 2015

Introduction

Indigenous peoples are one of the major groups of the ongoing process to define a post-2015 development agenda, which aspires to ‘leave no one behind’. They have been engaged in the process as an opportunity to not only remedy the shortcomings of the MDGs process - in which indigenous peoples were not mentioned in the goals and targets and seldom reflected in data collection and reporting on MDG achievement - but also for past and continuing historic injustices resulting from racism, discrimination and inequalities.

In this regard, indigenous peoples have been involved in the various discussions leading to the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda. They have highlighted the need to have specific references to a number of key issues in order to ensure their priorities and development challenges are also addressed in the agenda. Priorities identified include: commitments for protection of indigenous peoples’ rights to lands, territories and natural resources; for strengthening their self-determination, autonomy and self-governance, as well as their participation in governance and decision-making processes at the national and international levels; and to develop mechanisms for consultation and participation of indigenous peoples in the development process

UN Member States have made commitments in relation to the incorporation of indigenous rights in the post-2015 development agenda. In the “Outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples” (A/RES/69/2), the General Assembly notes “that indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising the right to development” and commit “to giving due consideration to all the rights of indigenous peoples in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda” (paragraph 37). This commitment reflects the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states in article 32 that “Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.

Despite this, there are few references to indigenous peoples in the current draft agenda. Indigenous representatives have expressed concern that they will be rendered ‘invisible’ in this agenda as well. At this stage, it is important to develop strategies for strengthening the visibility of indigenous peoples in the post-2015 agenda and its implementation, including the development of indicators for measuring progress and ensuring that their priorities are incorporated in policies and programmes aimed at reaching the SDGs. This is essential in order so that States can fulfil their commitments and make sure that ‘no one is left behind.’

I. Post 2015 Development Agenda

The “Zero draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda” contains 17 draft goals and 169 draft targets, which will be discussed during inter-governmental negotiations in the lead up to the Summit of the UN General Assembly to adopt the post-2015 development agenda, to be held from 25 to 27 September 2015.

Indigenous peoples are currently referenced, along with various other groups, in two such draft targets: target 2.3 on agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, and target 4.5 on eliminating gender disparities and increasing access to education. It is important to note that these two targets do not correspond to issues identified as priorities for indigenous peoples in the post-2015 development agenda.

The indicators that will correspond to these targets are still being developed and are expected to be finalized by March 2016 by the Inter Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Indigenous representatives have called for the development of culturally-relevant indicators that measure development progress for indigenous peoples through data disaggregated by ethnicity/indigenous status. Priority targets for the development of corresponding indicators include proposed targets 1.4 and 5.a (related to ownership and control over land and other forms of property); targets 2.3 and 4.5 (which are the only two targets that currently mention indigenous peoples); and 10.3 (on elimination of discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action).

II. Issues on the way forward

There is a current need to identify the way forward to ensure incorporation of indigenous peoples' needs and priorities in the post-2015 process, in light of the outcome document to the UN Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda.

Topics for further discussion include the following:

1. Reflecting on the goals and targets adopted as part of the post-2015 development agenda at the September 2015 summit and identifying opportunities for application of these in the situations of indigenous peoples;
2. Identifying measures for ensuring that indigenous peoples are taken into account in data collected at the national, regional and international levels to measure development progress for indigenous peoples;
3. Developing proposals for specific indicators to collect data for measuring development progress for indigenous peoples and strategies for engaging with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDGs;
4. Identifying informal measures for data collection to measure development progress for indigenous peoples, including the formulation of indigenous-specific targets and indicators that could be used by States, indigenous peoples, NGOs and others on an informal basis (e.g. through tool kits for data collection, voluntary targets and indicators that could be adopted on an informal basis, etc.).

III. Financing for Development

Indigenous peoples have also engaged with the Financing for Development process through the Major Groups structure, albeit to a lesser extent than the SDGs.

The negotiated draft outcome document of the 2015 Third International Conference on Financing for Development (A/CONF.227/6) makes four references to indigenous peoples:

- 1) Recognizing that indigenous peoples continue to be excluded from participating fully in the economy;
- 2) Emphasizing that social protection systems and measures are for all, including indigenous persons;
- 3) Recognizing that traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples can support social well-being and sustainable livelihoods;

- 4) Reaffirming that indigenous peoples have the right to maintain control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.