

This statement was not delivered in Plenary due to time constraints.

**Open Working Group on SDGs 13th Session
16-20 June 2014, United Nations, New York
Statement of the Indigenous Peoples' Major Group¹**

Esteemed Co-chairs, Member States, Major Groups, and representatives of civil society:

We, the Indigenous Peoples' Major Group congratulate and thank the co-chairs for moving this challenging process forward to this point. You have done remarkable work. We note the broad and general acknowledgment of the important role of Indigenous Peoples in the Open Working Group process and the ongoing efforts of various friendly states, major groups and civil society who worked with us to try to ensure our inclusion in the developing SDGs goals, targets and means of implementation.

Recall that Rio + 20 "The Future We Want" Paragraph 49 states:

“We stress the importance of the participation of indigenous peoples in the achievement of sustainable development. We also recognize the importance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the context of global, regional, national and subnational implementation of sustainable development strategies.”

This began as a hopeful process for us, with the early inclusion of the term “Indigenous Peoples” in numerous SDG goals, targets and means of implementation in the development of the document. Our hopes were further reinforced with his Excellency Ambassador Korosi asking for our trust and assuring our inclusion in the zero draft document during his address to the indigenous delegates of the 13th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May 2014.

We are not in the chapeau. We are in merely 2 SDG targets. One under Goal 2, where we are referenced as small-scale food producers,

¹ The Organizing Partners for the Indigenous Peoples Major Group include Tebtebba Foundation; International Indian Treaty Council; and Indigenous Information Network

and the other under Goal 4 regarding equal access to education and vocational training. All other meaningful references over the course of the last year or more to the term “Indigenous Peoples” were a target for deletion.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted in 2007 and we are now reaching the end of the 2nd International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, yet there still seems to be the need to defend the concept of Indigenous Peoples and our rights among some member states who questioned the relevance of our inclusion in this document.

To reiterate paragraph 49 of Rio + 20 calls for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to be the lens through which the SDGs are interpreted and implemented for the well-being of Indigenous Peoples.

We remain concerned that if we are not explicitly and meaningfully referred to in the operative text of the SDGs, that we will encounter immense constraint and exclusion from the implementation and monitoring processes. Our experience with and invisibility within Millennium Development Goals supports this concern. Those goals also claimed to be universal. The Indigenous Peoples Major Group advocates for the over 370 million Indigenous Peoples worldwide and we insist those voices to be heard and recognized throughout this document.

We note with appreciation the statement of the director general of Mexico at the close of this meeting. We echo his statement.

You don't have to turn your back on us. You can still take our hand and include us in the journey of the next 15 years. We can make valuable contributions. **Don't leave us behind.**