

Statement of Gay McDougall

The Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals

Inter-Active Dialogue with Stakeholders

New York, 23 April 2015

Co-facilitators, distinguished delegates,

The international community looks back on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals with pride. However, the experience of minorities and indigenous peoples has been bleak, with many communities experiencing theft of their lands and resources, and the targeted killing of community leaders who oppose harmful development initiatives. While majorities may have experienced progress, many minority and indigenous communities have actually fallen further behind with regard to development outcomes.

With this in mind, I wish to make four key points:

- 1) If the SDGs are to be successful they must be based on respect for fundamental human rights. Let me be clear: indigenous peoples and minorities are having their lands and resources stolen. The principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a fundamental rule of contract law in virtually every country; to not apply it when dealing with minority and indigenous communities is tantamount to discriminatory treatment.
- 2) Minorities and indigenous peoples have their own democratic processes which need to be recognised at the international level. In order to secure their right to effective participation, multi-stakeholder partnerships must include these structures.
- 3) Para. 37 of the zero draft of the Addis Ababa Accord welcomes “the growing number of businesses that embrace corporate responsibility” and urges “all others to do so”. We find this language extremely vague. Companies must be held accountable, and mechanisms for this need to be devised. Anything else would be a missed opportunity.
- 4) The zero draft of the Addis Ababa Accord shockingly makes only extremely limited mention of minorities or indigenous peoples, even in sections directly relating to them. For instance, para. 24 discusses “environmental crimes, especially illegal logging and illegal fishing.” However, the example it cites of “substantial damage” is “lost revenue”. Given the enormous harm that such illegal activities have on minorities and indigenous peoples, the paragraph must be recast to account for the real human costs and the rights at stake.

Thank you.

Gay McDougall

Chair

Minority Rights Group International