

United Nations High Level Plenary Forum

Session on Sustainable Development Goal #2, Ending Hunger and Achieving Food Security

July 7, 2020

Presentation by Andrea Carmen, International Indian Treaty Council and Lead Discussant for the Indigenous Peoples Major Group

In 2002, the International Indian Treaty Council co-sponsored, with UN FAO, the 1st Global Consultation on the Right to Food for Indigenous Peoples in Sololá Guatemala. Participants from all regions adopted the Declaration of Atitlan which identified 8 primary obstacles to the exercise of our right to food. These included lack of access to land, water and other resources, introduction of genetically-modified seeds and foods, imposed development, agro-chemicals, loss of systems for transmission of traditional knowledge, and the growing threat of climate change.

Although SDG 2 is one of only two goals that specifically mention Indigenous Peoples, these obstacles have persisted, and in some cases, are even more pronounced. Indigenous Peoples remain economically marginalized in both developed and developing countries. Although the UN recognizes that small-scale and family farmers, including Indigenous Peoples, produce a substantial portion of the world's food supply, few policies and programs exist to support them. The fragility of high-technology, corporate-controlled food production and distribution systems has been further highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The essential value of our traditional knowledge for adaptation to and mitigation of Climate Change, including our millennial practices for food production, was recognized by the UNFCCC in the 2015 Paris Agreement and the 2018 creation of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform. Nevertheless, actions undertaken by states and corporations, as well as, at times, the UN system itself, continue to undermine the ability of Indigenous Peoples to protect, defend and strengthen our traditional food systems. If SDG 2's targets are to be met, the full participation of Indigenous Peoples, recognition of our knowledge systems, and respect for our rights are essential.

Thank you, Choque Utesia