

# **Global Indigenous Youth Caucus Declaration on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples 2014**

## **The GIYC Preparatory meeting in Inari, Finland April 9-11, 2013**

Representatives of Indigenous youth from Africa, Arctic, Asia, Central and South America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia, North America, and the Pacific gathered at Inari, Finland 9- 11 April, 2013,

*Welcome* the opportunity to raise the voices of Indigenous youth as part of the preparatory process of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples as approved in GA Resolution A/65/198,

*Welcome further* GA Resolution A/66/296 specifying the modalities of participation by Indigenous Peoples in the World Conference,

*Convinced* the World Conference has the potential for the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples by employing the principles of free, prior and informed consent and that it is an invaluable opportunity to effectuate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,

*Underline* the significant meaning of establishing the Indigenous Global Coordinating Group and the full and effective participation of Indigenous youth representatives in such group,

*Highlight* that the participation of Indigenous youth (which comprise 50 percent of the Indigenous population) at the WCIP will greatly affect the rights and development of Indigenous youth and a prepared, equal and representative presence must be secured,

*Acknowledge* the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous youth,

*Affirm* the following priority themes to be implemented.

### **Right to Full and Effective Participation**

1. *Emphasize* that Indigenous youth must be consulted with, and must give their consent, on all matters and decisions that are relevant to them,
2. *Emphasize further* that Indigenous youth have the right to adequate opportunities to act and to represent themselves in their own Indigenous and State political institutions at local, national and international levels,
3. *Reiterate* that youth have an inherent right to develop and deliver their own policy programs and determine their own decision-making processes, at State and international levels,

4. *Affirm* the right of Indigenous youth to participate through the use of their mother languages in all matters of political, social and cultural life in relation to Indigenous rights,
5. *Reaffirm* the right of Indigenous youth to work for the defense of Indigenous rights including systems of justice,
6. *Reaffirm further* the right of Indigenous youth to access training and educational programs on human rights instruments and information on UN programs in order to defend and practice rights as Indigenous Peoples.

## **Recommendations**

7. *Urge* all States and UN agencies to establish proper mechanisms, including ensuring the right to internet access<sup>1</sup> via promoting and facilitating access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), to address local Indigenous youth realities to guarantee effective participation in all aspects of their education, cultural, political and social lives in their native languages.
8. *Call on* all States and UN agencies to ensure that Indigenous youth participate in decision-making processes that specifically affect them; and shape the planning, development, and delivery stages of such processes, including providing sufficient resources and space for such participation.
9. *Urge* all States and UN agencies to support youth empowerment through training programs to ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous youth. Indigenous youth shall have the opportunity to plan, develop and lead these programs.
10. *Recommend* all States to take positive measures to secure Indigenous Peoples' right to freely participate in State political institutions at all levels, and not to be excluded from other fora due to engagement in Indigenous politics.

## **Governance and Sovereignty**

11. *Recognize* that the assertion of colonial powers over Indigenous Peoples were based on illegitimate theories such as the Doctrine of Discovery, Mare Nullius, and Terra Nullius, and that the enduring effects of these doctrines continue to erode and remove intergenerational teachings while disempowering Indigenous youth,
12. *Affirm* that it is important for Indigenous youth to play a major role in the decolonization processes through the design, development, and implementation of policies that affect Indigenous youth,

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<sup>1</sup> The promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet (A/HRC/20/L.13) , Article 3 provides "Calls upon all States to promote and facilitate access to the Internet and international cooperation aimed at the development of media and information and communications facilities in all countries," available at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G12/147/10/PDF/G1214710.pdf?OpenElement>

13. *Reaffirm* that all States shall have Indigenous representatives selected via Indigenous Peoples' own procedures and processes to define, design and deliver Indigenous policies.

## **Recommendations**

14. *Urge* all States to provide redress under UNDRIP Article 28<sup>2</sup> and focus on empowering Indigenous youth to revitalize their traditional governance structures and political systems.
15. *Call on* the UN to have an optional protocol on the UNDRIP presented in the UNPFII in its 14<sup>th</sup> session, and that such an optional protocol shall ultimately become an international convention on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, with specific reference to participation of Indigenous youth in the design, development and implementation.
16. *Recommend* that the existing UN bodies on Indigenous issues include youth representatives to monitor the compliance of the implementation of UNDRIP by the States.
17. *Recommend further* that the UN General Assembly appoint a Deputy Secretary-General and an Assistant Secretary-General on the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## **Identity**

18. *Recognize* that positive self-identity is fulfilled by self-determination, and is necessary to affirm and create Indigenous youth identity,
19. *Affirm* that issues of Indigenous youth identity are inherently linked to, and strengthened by, Indigenous language and traditional knowledge, livelihoods, lands and territories, handicrafts, family structures, and belief systems, as well as in their contemporary forms,
20. *Acknowledge* that Indigenous youth in urban-settings encounter difficulties accessing cultural support of identity.

## **Recommendations**

21. *Call* for actions from all States and UN agencies to secure resources for processes that support self-determined positive Indigenous youth identities.
22. *Urge* all States to implement the UNDRIP Article 33<sup>3</sup> into their legislation at all levels.

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<sup>2</sup> UNDRIP Article 28

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to redress, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation, for the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent.
2. Unless otherwise freely agreed upon by the peoples concerned, compensation shall take the form of lands, territories and resources of equal in quality, size and legal status or of monetary compensation or other appropriate redress.

23. *Urge* all States to give special attention to and provide adequate funding to foster healthy development for urban-setting Indigenous youth in the areas of social, educational, cultural, and economic programs. These development opportunities shall be determined and led by the urban-setting Indigenous youth.

### **Education**

24. *Concerned* about dominant societies' knowledge and misinformation about Indigenous Peoples; and educational plans and curriculum that are not supportive of Indigenous youth,
25. *Recognize* that education is a vital issue for Indigenous youth, and there is an urgent need for learning and education in/of Indigenous languages,
26. *Affirm* Indigenous youth's right to learn, centering on self-determination over the choices that they make, and what that education looks like.

### **Recommendations**

27. *Call on* all States, UN agencies and relevant organizations to locate funds and promote access to educational programs in Indigenous languages for Indigenous youth.
28. *Recommend* that all States and UN agencies implement the UNDRIP Article 14<sup>4</sup> by ensuring that Indigenous children and youth have access to education in/on their Indigenous languages, and develop culturally appropriate specific educational programs, policies, plans and curriculums defined by indigenous peoples themselves, which accurately incorporate their histories, identities, values, beliefs, cultures, languages and traditional knowledge.

### **Traditional Livelihood, Lands and Territories**

29. *Affirm* the inherent right of Indigenous youth to their land,
30. *Reaffirm* the traditional livelihoods, lands and territories as a prerequisite for existence of Indigenous Peoples,

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<sup>3</sup> UNDRIP Article 33

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions. This does not impair the right of indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship of the States in which they live.
2. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine the structures and to select the membership of their institutions in accordance with their own procedures.

<sup>4</sup> UNDRIP Article 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.



31. *Recognize* the need to take urgent and decisive measures to ensure full and effective implementation of Indigenous youth's rights to their traditional way of living, including the rights recognized in the UNDRIP, with particular focus on livelihoods, lands and territories, resource management, food production, water rights, health practices and medicine, and traditional knowledge,
32. *Acknowledge* the serious implications of climate change on Indigenous youth and their ability to continue to practice traditional living systems,
33. *Express concern* that the threat and reality of displacement due to effects of climate change, eliminates the connection Indigenous youth have to their history, culture and identity.

### **Recommendations**

34. *Urge* all States to acknowledge Indigenous Peoples' right to land and implement necessary protective legislation without further delay in order to enable Indigenous youth to participate actively in their traditional livelihoods now and in the future.
35. *Recommend* that all States promote self-determination of Indigenous Peoples, particularly through the principle of free, prior and informed consent regarding any kind of encroachment to Indigenous lands and resources and thus ensuring the transfer of customs, belief systems, values and traditional knowledge from generation to generation in order to protect, maintain and evolve Indigenous cultures, identities and languages for Indigenous youth.
36. *Call on* all States and UN agencies to take effective measures to combat and minimize the effects of climate change, empower Indigenous youth and communities to protect and manage their environment, territories and resources and further build Indigenous youth capacity on sustainable development practices based on traditional knowledge and relationship with the land to provide economic benefits.

### **Forms of Violence**

37. *Emphasize* that racism and discrimination against Indigenous youth are not only forms of violence, but also generate actual physical violence, including hate speech and rape,
38. *Emphasize further* that Indigenous communities' solutions are important to addressing violence, including long-term sustainable approaches.

### **Recommendations**

39. *Urge* all States to fully implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA)<sup>5</sup>, with specific focus on implementing paragraphs 15 to 23 in the section of Programme of Action.
40. *Urge* all States, UN agencies, and human rights institutions at all levels to follow up and protect Indigenous women, youth and children who are victims of State power, i.e. military, police and other law enforcement authorities. This should include increased study and collection of data surrounding forms of violence with authorities, as a method of accountability.
41. *Call* on all States and UN agencies to highlight the high rate of suicide and incarceration of Indigenous youth as an extraordinary crisis. Furthermore that all States and UN agencies should address these issues with affirmative actions, including community counseling on Indigenous youth's mental health, incarceration and the high rates of suicide.

### **Health**

42. *Affirm* that culturally safe health approaches are critical for the wellbeing of Indigenous youth and children,
43. *Reaffirm* that the health care services that address Indigenous youth shall go beyond biological matters and that effective and spiritual connections shall be implemented from the cultural point of view, including comprehensive services which involve Indigenous therapies, community leaders and Indigenous youth themselves.
44. *Express concern* that the current environmental studies only reflect the environmental impact of nature, and a certain degree of social impact, but fail to reflect the cultural values of Indigenous communities,
45. *Express further concern* of tension between contemporary economic development, including tension caused by multinational corporation investment interests, and Indigenous perspectives and values,

### **Recommendations**

46. *Call on* all States and UN agencies to develop, implement and assess with the direct participation of Indigenous youth affirmative action programs around health issues for Indigenous youth and children with an intercultural approach, based on the best practices and ancestral knowledge of Indigenous Peoples.

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<sup>5</sup> Adopted by consensus at the 2001 World Conference against Racism (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa, the DDPA is a comprehensive, action-oriented document that proposes concrete measures to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, which also specifically addresses Indigenous Peoples. It is holistic in its vision, addresses a wide range of issues, and contains far-reaching recommendations and practical measures. Detailed information available at: <http://www.un.org/durbanreview2009/ddpa.shtml>

47. *Urge* all States and UN agencies to engage in training Indigenous youth in form of community based health workers on preventative measures of common fatal infections, such as malaria.
48. *Recommend* that the UN agencies to take action based on the report of the 2nd International Indigenous Women's Environmental and Reproductive Health Symposium, in particular the understanding of environmental violence<sup>6</sup> and its range of health, reproductive and cultural effects on Indigenous children and youth.

## Conclusion

To conclude, we reiterate the importance of engaging Indigenous youth at all stages of preparatory processes building up to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples at local, regional and international levels, the High-level Plenary Meeting itself, and the actions and plans to follow up and implement the outcomes of High-level Plenary Meeting. We thus again call upon all States, UN agencies and Indigenous organizations to support and provide needed resources, including funding possibilities, to guarantee the full and effective participation of Indigenous youth in this process with their free prior and informed consent.



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<sup>6</sup> Report of the International Indigenous Women's Environmental and Reproductive Health Symposium, Chickaloon, Alaska, April 2012. Environmental Violence definition: States and corporations deny "provable" impacts despite the clear evidence that they cause a range of serious health and reproductive impacts which disproportionately affect Indigenous women and children. This constitutes "environmental violence" by States and corporations and must be identified as such by Indigenous Peoples and human rights bodies.