

THE FUTURE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WANT

Statement of Indigenous Peoples Major Group

Indigenous Peoples are happy for this opportunity to reiterate our key messages for Rio+20 as these relate to the Zero Draft.

1. Recognition of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development

Rio + 20 must embrace a 4th pillar of sustainable development – the ethical and moral values needed to nurture and care for the Earth. This cultural pillar encompasses the cultural and spiritual traditions of humanity, renewed in the light of 21st century challenges.

Our Earth-changing age - the Anthropocene – must bring forth the necessary cultural transformations to address global systemic change. Rio + 20 must engender a deep love and moral responsibility towards Mother Earth and her intrinsic life-giving values, transcending conceptions of ecosystem services for human well-being, towards a reverence for the sacredness of life.

Life in harmony with nature is the vision of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, which can only be realised through a culturally transformed vision of sustainable development.

Culture underpins the other three pillars of sustainable development and its importance is acknowledged in Paragraph 16 of the Zero Draft. This paragraph must be strengthened and brought forward and placed after Paragraph 6, to become part of our vision of sustainable development.

16. We acknowledge the diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations contribute to the enrichment of humankind and the protection of the Earth's life support system. We emphasize the importance of ***culture as the fourth pillar of*** sustainable development. We call for a holistic approach to sustainable development which will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature.

2. Recognition of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a standard in the implementation of sustainable development at all levels.

We welcome the inclusion of Paragraph 21 in the Zero Draft. The human-rights based approach to sustainable development should be affirmed and integrated in the outcome document of Rio + 20.

21.a. We recognize the importance of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the global, regional and national implementation of sustainable development strategies. ***Free, prior, informed consent (FPIC) is the standard to be applied in the development process affecting indigenous peoples.***

21.b. We also recognize the need to reflect the views of children and youth as the issues we are addressing will have a deep impact on the youth of today and the generations that follow.

3. The cornerstones of green economies are diverse local economies, in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development, biodiversity loss and climate change.

References to “the Green Economy” in the Zero Draft must be changed to “green economies,” embracing economic diversity, including Indigenous Peoples’ diverse local economies. Indigenous Peoples’ self-determined development, also defined as development with culture and identity, are critical components of resilient economies and ecosystems. They promote sustainable local livelihoods, community solidarity and ecosystem resilience. For the most part of human history and development, local economies have provided these multiple values, and are as important as ever, in the light of the contemporary multiple crises.

4. Safeguard the lands, territories and resources, and associated customary management and sustainable use systems of Indigenous Peoples, small producers and local communities as essential contributions to sustainable development.

The renewed political commitment to sustainable development, must target the poor. Overemphasis and focus on the macro-economy without due regard for diverse local economies will not deliver on poverty eradication goals.

Beyond income, indigenous peoples and the poor, need to have secure rights over their lands, territories and resources and to exercise their customary resource management and sustainable use systems, which are their basic sources of wealth and well-being.

Public policy must prioritise support for building resilient local economies and ecosystems and the self-development efforts of Indigenous Peoples, including strong government regulation to protect local economies from predatory investments.

Governments must address the intensifying land and natural resource conflicts arising from resource extractive industries – oil, gas and mining, as well as logging and export-oriented forestry and agriculture – which transfer wealth away from local peoples, while degrading ecosystems and creating poverty.

5. Indigenous and traditional knowledge are distinct and special contributions to 21st century learning and action.

Reference in the Zero draft to learning and knowledge-sharing platforms must embrace indigenous and local knowledge, and diverse knowledge systems. They are equally important as science for the purposes of assessment processes, monitoring and defining indicators for sustainable development.