

# Statement of the Indigenous Peoples of Asia and Pacific to APMCDRR 2022

We, Indigenous Peoples (IPs), are a self-identified heterogeneous group with diverse cultures, traditions, worldviews, languages, needs, and desires living in 90 countries worldwide. We are the most marginalized, disadvantaged, and excluded in society from various aspects. However, we have remarkably contributed to safeguarding the world's 80% biodiversity though our total population accounted around 5 to 6% occupying in 20% of the global lands and territories. Within IPs, there are multiple identities based on age, disability, gender, geographical representations, ethnicity, cultures, and languages among others that intersect with each other's identities and social categories which further compound to exclusion, discrimination, and marginalization at the local, national, regional, and global levels. Many of the indigenous peoples' organizations have been working on these multiple aspects to protect, promote and ensure the Indigenous people's rights at all levels, which have been supported by some of the non-indigenous organizations including UN agencies, research institutions and universities. However, the situations of indigenous peoples, marginalization and discrimination have not been improved remarkably. Instead, the overall situation of Indigenous Peoples and their intersectional groups including Indigenous Persons with Disabilities (IPwDs) within the Indigenous community, became further marginalized and excluded from socio-economic, cultural, political, educational, natural disasters and related policies and mechanisms. Thus, we realize the huge gap in mainstreaming Indigenous Peoples and their intersectional identities in the entire institutional structures, funding sources and mechanisms, programs, and projects related to environment and disaster risk reduction (DRR).

Some references to IPs including women, children, youth, person with disabilities have been clearly mentioned in the **Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-2030)** especially in the people centered preventive approach to disaster starting from design to implementation of the policies, plans and standards by involvement of public, private and civic institutions. Furthermore, it has also emphasized the building capacities and empowerment of indigenous peoples and other communities in disaster risk management through regulatory and financial support and underlined the importance of indigenous and local knowledge and practices to balance with the scientific knowledge in disaster risk assessment, analysis and development of appropriate policies, strategies, programmes and plans. More specifically, the important contribution of indigenous peoples on development and implementation of DRR plans and mechanisms including the early warning systems has been highlighted in the framework based on their experiences and traditional knowledge.

## **ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THEIR INTERSECTIONAL GROUPS IN RELATION TO DRR**

Despite limited contribution of IPs and their intersectional groups, we are at the forefront to face the issues and challenges in relation to DRR. Disasters affect everyone but impacts differently. We have been facing multiple layers of discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion at all levels mainly in relation to institutional structures, policies, procedures, and operations, human resources and partnership. Some of the key issues and challenges we have faced are listed hereunder:

- We have contributed to natural resources and disaster risk management based on their indigenous knowledge and skills, which are not respected, recognized, and not understood their risk status by the state and other relevant stakeholders.
- We have faced multiple forms of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of policies, programs related to disaster risk reduction and management at all levels
- IPs including indigenous women, youths and persons with disabilities are not provided appropriate platforms for their meaningful participation and inclusion in society, processes, and mechanisms at all levels
- IPs and their unique positionalities, cultural diversity, the roles and contributions in the mainstream society are not fully recognized, respected and accepted as part of the human diversity and humanity
- IPs, indigenous women, youth and indigenous persons with disabilities are not equally treated in the public and private spheres. we often face discrimination and lack of equal opportunity in the society. Most of us live in geographically remote, ecologically fragile areas however, we have sustainably managed the limited resources and become resilient and adaptable to the externalities. We have limited access to the resources, services and least investments are made to build the resiliency of these people to deal with those externalities.
- In most of the cases, IPs and the intersectional groups have confronted with the limited or lack of accessibility to the reliable information in the language understandable to them. Mostly, the information is one way in the national languages that most of the indigenous peoples found difficulty in understanding it. Moreover, very few almost no information is provided in the accessible format targeting the people with disabilities such as Braille, audio-visual, plain, easy to read version including sign language interpretation, which is also a form of discrimination to most of the IPs and the intersectional groups.
- Non-respect of the skills, practices and traditional occupations and the evolving capacities of Indigenous peoples, youth, indigenous women, and indigenous people with disabilities to preserve their identities and culture is an issue.
- Indigenous peoples have the practice of self-selection and representation in the indigenous societies which is also followed in identifying the self-selective representatives to the regional and global processes and mechanisms, which is not respected and followed properly by national governments, some of the UN mechanisms and relevant stakeholders at all levels.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Ensure that all our demands are reflected in the Sendai Framework aligning with United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other international human rights instruments and mechanisms.
- Ensure the meaningful, full, and effective participation of all indigenous peoples, women, youth and persons with disabilities with self-selected representation in governing positions at all levels, and establishing effective mechanism to hold states accountable towards human rights obligations
- Provide special and concrete measures to enforce, operationalize and ensure full exercise of right to self-determination, autonomy, and customary self-government systems at all levels as enshrined in the UNDRIP, ILO 169, CEDAW, and UNCRPD, and other international instruments
- Improve and ensure effective implementation of the existing policies and laws related to natural resource, environment, and disasters through the approach of Indigeneity, Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (IGEDSI) from intersectional approach
- Ensure that all programs, projects, and initiatives related to disaster risk assessment and management including planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation process have full and effective participation with allocation and investment of sufficient funds and resources for Indigenous peoples, their representative organizations and networks
- Ensure proper translation and interpretation of the information accessible and understandable to the indigenous peoples and their intersectional groups including the disability inclusion services such as Sign Language Interpretation and personal assistance and support systems, assistive devices and communication facilities like pictorial, easy-to-read version, mother/local languages
- Facilitate and promote cross-cultural and country learning and sharing of the resources and knowledge among the indigenous groups through organizational collaboration and networking to consolidate and amplify the issues and concerns more collectively, comprehensively, and holistically
- Guarantee fundamental rights such as citizenship, education, health, social safety nets, food and livelihood security, income, skills, access to land and productive resources including our collective ways of life, socio-economic empowerment based on customary systems and practices, indigenous knowledge to lead a self-determined development and dignified life equally
- Strengthen IPs and their representative organizations to advocate for the issues and concerns to end all forms of violence and sexual harassment against indigenous women and girls with/out disabilities at all levels, and guarantee accessible justice mechanisms including grievance management and adequate social protection
- Ensure full and effective participation of IPs and the intersectional groups with meaningful representation in state and non-state mechanisms in all social, economic, cultural and political spheres

- Invest and prioritize institutional strengthening and leadership building of IPs and their organizations for meaningful representation as "contributors" and “equal partners” in disaster risk reduction and management for a just, peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable society
  - Involve the IPs in the studies and research related to disaster and environment management with disaggregated data by indigeneity, gender, and disability as appropriate
  - Prioritize gender, disability, and indigeneity in short- and long-term disaster management plans and programs under the state and non-state mechanisms
  - Promote meaningful participation of indigenous peoples including indigenous women, indigenous youth and indigenous persons with disabilities in its entire response mechanisms including in its phases of preparedness, relief, rehabilitation and recovery/reconstruction
  - Establish the mechanisms for direct access to the resources and monitoring & evaluation with disaggregated data at all levels.
  - Develop database system and framework for indigenous peoples’ effective participation to guide the implementation of the Sendai Framework to 2030 and beyond. The database system supports to record, document, and share data with everyone including the indigenous communities.
  - Build the capacity and funding to address and meet all the targets related to the Sendai Framework by 2030 and beyond.
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