

United Nations General Assembly: Special Session on Indigenous Affairs

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United Nations General Assembly: Special Session on Indigenous Affairs

Dear UNGA Indigenous Affairs Delegates:

Let me begin by welcoming you to SSUNS 2016, and what is sure to be a highlight of your Model UN career. Whether this is your first, or possibly your last Model UN conference, whether your Model UN is just beginning or coming to an end, the entire dais and myself would like to welcome you to SSUNS 2016, and specifically this UNGA. My name is Geoffrey Nicholson and I am a 4th year Bachelor of Commerce student double majoring in Accounting and Finance. Now I may not have a conventional academic Model UN background, but I have dedicated my life outside the classroom to the pursuit of Model UN. I, like you began my Model UN journey in high school attending New Mexico Model UN, and through my love for the debate have found myself an active member of McGill's Model UN community, including being a member of the McMUN Secretariat for 2 years now and a member of the travelling team. Through these experiences I have had the privilege to meet your amazing vice-chairs. When brainstorming this topic, their passion and dedication for the topics at hand were evident and through their knowledge and experiences I am confident that they will be taking over as your chairs and the weekend progresses.

The UNGA Special Session on Indigenous Affairs Committee has been called to order this year at SSUNS 2016 to address the global issue regarding the mistreatment and underrepresentation of indigenous peoples across the globe. With an increasing globalized world it has become more and more apparent the increasing gap between the developing governments in each countries and the treatment of the indigenous people in the regions. This committee is assembling to handle just that issue. It is time that the global community turns their attention to where the world developed from and treat those indigenous people from country with the respect and support they deserve.

From within the hall of the general assembly all the nations of the world will gather to discuss and solve some of the most important indigenous issues of the modern era. With other significant global and environmental factors playing a role, it will be a challenging yet rewarding process. Throughout this GA topics such as the displacement of indigenous peoples due to both environmental factors and governments, healthcare systems; including mental health as well as the overall poverty and underdevelopment experienced by indigenous peoples. These topics are crucial to the support and restoration of indigenous populations because if unaddressed could lead to the further injustice against these significant cultural groups.

My final piece of advice to all of you for this weekend is to make the most of it, both inside and outside committee. Model UN is all what you put into it so make sure to do your research, actively participate in committee and most importantly make friends and have fun. Take advantage of this amazing experience and all that it can bring to you. Best of luck and on behalf of the entire dais I look forward to meeting you in November.

Best wishes,
Geoffrey Nicholson
Chair



Topic 1: Indigenous Peoples, Healthcare, Mental Health, and Wellness

Section 1: Background Information

There are approximately 370 million indigenous peoples that reside in over 70 countries worldwide. They are one of the world's most marginalized and outcast peoples, and more often than not, experience isolation from many essential government services.¹ A primary example of this isolation is the disparity of indigenous people's access to healthcare. Around the world, indigenous people's access to healthcare services are not equal to, and often considerably lower than, healthcare the available for a nation's non-indigenous population.² Indigenous people experience an overall poorer quality of life, are more likely to have disabilities, suffer from long-term health problems, and they are ultimately more likely to die younger than their non-indigenous counterparts. Extreme poverty is a common trait of indigenous communities worldwide. This poverty is rooted in systemic factors such as lack of access to education and social services, destruction of indigenous economic systems and socio-political structures, forced displacement, armed conflict, and the degradation of their traditional lands.³ These factors, all remnants of colonization, are exacerbated by structural racism and discrimination, and make the young, old, and expecting mothers in indigenous communities especially vulnerable to poor health.

The result of these external factors on native communities, are that indigenous people experience disproportionately high levels of maternal and infant mortality, malnutrition, cardiovascular illness, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.⁴ Indigenous women can be especially vulnerable targets for these severe health problems, as they are often made victims during armed conflicts and natural disasters, and are often denied access to education, property, and economic resources in much higher occurrences than the men of their community. However, women play a very important role in indigenous communities, as the primary caretaker of their family's health and wellness. This creates a systemic disparity and lack of understanding for proper preventative measures and treatments for common diseases and infections that are traditionally passed along generation to generation.

Perhaps even more troubling, incidences of public health issues such as addiction, alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, and suicide continue to increase in indigenous

¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "Indigenous People's Access to Health Services." *The State of the World's Indigenous People*, 2016, 2-9.

² Health and Nutrition, UNICEF TARCO. "Maternal, Neonatal, Child Health (MNCH): Health disparities in LAC." UNICEF TARCO. Last modified July 21, 2011.

³ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "The State of the World's Indigenous People." *The State of the World's Indigenous People*, 2009, 155-183.

⁴ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The State of the World's Indigenous People*, 2009, 155-183.



communities worldwide, with many regions declaring a state of emergency for the number of suicide attempts seen in individual native communities and towns.⁵

The goal behind this topic is to encourage member states to expand the outreach of national health systems to provide holistic health and education programs geared specifically for a nation's indigenous population.⁶ These programs should address, among other primary issues, immediate support for communities destroyed by mental illness and suicide, and provisions of basic medical supplies and medications for the treatable diseases and infections wracking the area. It would also be favorable to incorporate indigenous healers and cultural perspectives on health and illness in any policies, guidelines or programs that may be implemented.⁷ These issues need to be addressed while keeping in mind the tenuous relationship and lack of trust many member states have with their indigenous population, government finances, available NGOs, the urgency of immediate action, and the differing opinions of member states.

Section 2: Focus Diseases

Communicable Disease: Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease that primarily affects peoples living in poverty, and according to 2011 UN statistics, there are 8.7 million cases of TB worldwide, and 1.1 million deaths occurred that year as a result of the disease.⁸ Due to TB's association of occurring in situations where there is severe and widespread poverty, the disease identifies communities of indigenous people as a primary target. For instance, in Canada, in 2006, "the First Nation's tuberculosis rate was 27.4 per 100,000, or 35 times higher than among the non-aboriginal population born in Canada. Tuberculosis is a particular threat to the Inuit in Canada, where the rates are 121 per 100,000, just over 150 times higher than the non-aboriginal population."⁹ The Guaraní are Bolivia's third-largest

indigenous groups and statistics indicate they are five to eight times more likely to contract tuberculosis than the national average. While many effective programs have been designed to combat TB, they often do not effectively reach the indigenous population due to issues such as geographic remoteness, cultural barriers, language differences, and lack of access to medical care, amongst others.

Mental Health

⁵ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The State of the World's Indigenous People*, 2009, 155-183.

⁶ United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. "Recommendations Database."

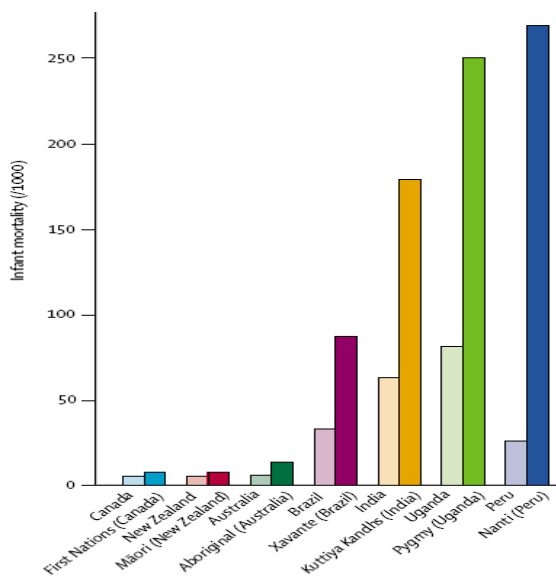
⁷ United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. "Recommendations Database."

⁸ Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous People's Issues. "The Health of Indigenous Peoples." *Thematic Paper on the Health of Indigenous Peoples*, June 2014, 1-9.

⁹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The State of the World's Indigenous People*, 2009, 155-183.

Young adults in Indigenous communities around the world overwhelmingly suffer from higher instances of mental illness in comparison to their non-indigenous counterparts. Statistics from the Americas show that depression occurs in much higher rates amongst indigenous young people than non-indigenous young people. Their personal experiences of colonization, racism, cultural and ethnic marginalization, tension between traditional and western values, and limited access to resources and information put young indigenous people at greater risk of depression and in too many cases, suicide.¹⁰

For example, among Inuit youth in northern Canada, suicide rates are some of the highest in the world, at eleven times the national Canadian average.¹¹ Early April of 2016 saw a small rural community located on Canada's James Bay, Attawapiskat; declare a state of emergency due to the overwhelmingly large number of suicide attempts. According to the Chief of the aboriginal community, 11 people tried to take their life on the night of April 9th, and since September of 2015, 101 people have attempted suicide, in a community of only 2000 people.¹² Drug abuse, addiction, and alcoholism are also disproportionately more common amongst indigenous peoples, and have been linked to frequent evictions and resettlements of indigenous communities.¹³



Source: Lancet Series on Indigenous Health, Vol. 367, June 2006, p2022

Infant and Child Mortality among Indigenous Peoples

Over the past decades, improvements in medical care and knowledge have resulted in a significant decline in infant and mother mortality in many regions around the world. This general decline has also highlighted the heightened mortality for indigenous children in comparison the rest of the population.¹⁴ The following graph indicates the infant mortality per 1000 newborn babies in indigenous communities, versus the overall population.¹⁵

¹⁰Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous People's Issues. "The Health of Indigenous Peoples." *Thematic Paper on the Health of Indigenous Peoples*, June 2014, 1-9.

¹¹ World Health Organization. "Health of Indigenous Peoples."

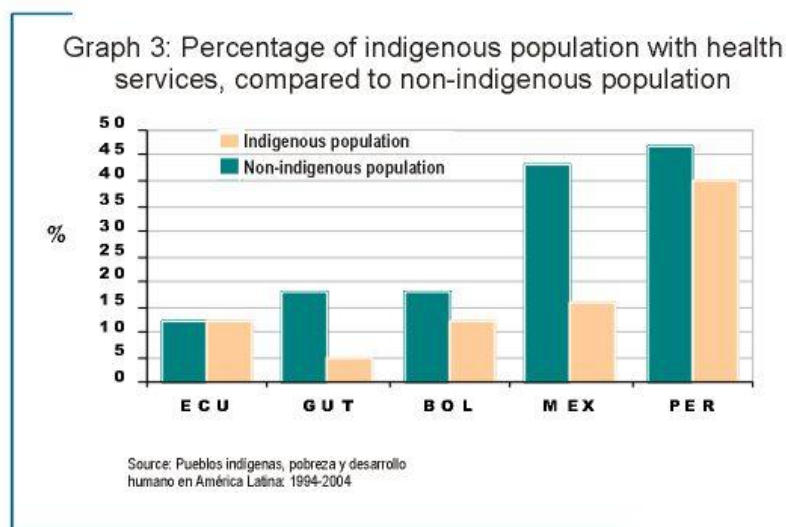
¹² Canadian Broadcast Corporation. "Attawapiskat declares state of emergency over spate of suicide attempts." *CBC News (Canada)*, April 9, 2016.

¹³ First Peoples Worldwide. "The Challenges We Face."

¹⁴Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous People's Issues. "The Health of Indigenous Peoples."

¹⁵ World Health Organization. "Health of Indigenous Peoples."

In Latin America specifically, infant mortality amongst indigenous children is 60% higher than for non-indigenous children, ranging from 1.11 times higher in Chile to 3.09 times higher than the general population in Panama.¹⁶ When a birth is attended by trained personnel, complications and deaths decrease. Women in the wealthiest percentile



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personnel during labor is not homogenous with the rest of the population. The following graph shows the percentage of Latin American indigenous population with access to health services compared to the remaining non-indigenous population.¹⁷

The most common causes of death for newborns are neonatal infections, perinatal asphyxia and complications deriving from prematurity. Most deaths from these causes can be prevented. Low-birth weight newborns are especially vulnerable, and represent between 60 and 90 per cent of the deaths of babies. Many neonatal deaths are also related to the mother's condition during pregnancy – early or late age for pregnancy, malnutrition, short interval between childbirths, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy complications. In Latin America, the lack of quality health care for mothers and newborns contributes to the mortality of newborns, especially in low-income indigenous communities. Attention services centered on the prenatal period, qualified birth assistance and early postnatal attention need to be guaranteed in order to reduce mortality.¹⁸

Section 2: Past Actions

¹⁶Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous People's Issues. "The Health of Indigenous Peoples."

¹⁷ Health and Nutrition, UNICEF TARCO. "Maternal, Neonatal, Child Health (MNCH): Health disparities in LAC."

¹⁸ Health and Nutrition, UNICEF TARCO. "Maternal, Neonatal, Child Health (MNCH): Health disparities in LAC."



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The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly on the 13th of September 2007, by a majority of 144 states in favor, 4 votes against (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States), and 11 abstentions. As a General Assembly Declaration it is not a legally binding instrument under international law, but the UN describes it as setting “an important standard for the treatment of indigenous peoples that will undoubtedly be a significant tool towards eliminating human rights violations against the planet's 370 million indigenous people and assisting them in combating discrimination and marginalization.”¹⁹ The UNDRIP underlines in article 24 that “indigenous people have the right to traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices...[and that they also] have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, [and that] states shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.”²⁰ Despite this affirmation, little improvements have been achieved in bridging the gap of availability of health care services to indigenous communities.

In recent years, international and regional health initiatives have begun to pay greater attention to the specific health needs of indigenous peoples, many of which were brought about by the first International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004), proclaimed by the UNGA. The World Health Organization (WHO), for example, has various initiatives administered by the Health and Human Rights Team, that focus on improving the health of indigenous people, and the World Health Assembly (WHA), has passed a number of resolutions stating its intention to tackle health disparities between indigenous and non-indigenous populations. The Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) has been one of the organizations most involved in promoting indigenous health. In 1993, PAHO held a meeting on the health of indigenous people, and secured a commitment from member Governments (at least at the policy level) to grant priority to improving the health of indigenous peoples while respecting their ancestral culture and knowledge.²¹

WHO has also considered a new global strategy that targets Tuberculosis prevention, care and control after 2015. A key pillar of the potential strategy is to strengthen and expand the core functions of TB programs, with a particular emphasis on outreach services to underserved and vulnerable populations in consultation with indigenous communities and civil society.²²

With regard to mental health, PAHO/WHO created an Adolescent and Youth Regional Strategy and Plan of Action to enhance the health and well-being of indigenous adolescents. The Plan of Action calls for inter-agency data sharing regarding indigenous youth and adolescents, and creating or enhancing leadership programs, especially among indigenous youth. The aim of this project has been to learn how mental health problems

¹⁹ United Nations. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

²⁰ United Nations. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

²¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The State of the World's Indigenous People*,

²² Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous People's Issues. "The Health of Indigenous Peoples."



are identified in the socio-cultural context of indigenous youth; and to identify best practices that take into account respective socio-cultural factors that may render a western mental health perspective less effective.²³

Despite these ongoing programs, there are still many barriers and challenges to providing indigenous communities with access to adequate health care systems, education, and support. Collection of health-related data is a key challenge in addressing indigenous health disparities. Not all countries consistently collect differentiated information on indigenous people, and existing data is often incomplete and of poor quality. For instance, in several countries in Asia, a related issue of concern is the lack of birth registration or citizenship documentation afforded to indigenous individuals, which limits many indigenous peoples' access to basic public services, including for health and education.²⁴

As well, many indigenous families address illness with a combination of both traditional and western approaches and practices, therefore it is critical that these systems achieve symbiosis, so that indigenous peoples have physical, geographical, and financial access to effective and culturally appropriate health care. Creating alliances with traditional healers and incorporating their skills into national health care systems can help to combat both the lack of access and the distrust of indigenous peoples in the healthcare system.²⁵

Lack of accessibility is also a barrier for indigenous peoples right to health, and this includes physical and geographic accessibility, affordability, and non-discrimination in accessing services. In many countries, there are still significant costs (for example: transportation, food, accommodation, family care, medication, and loss of workdays) for health services that prevent or postpone low-income and isolated populations from seeking health care. Finding health staff that speak and understand indigenous languages is difficult, and poor communication between providers and clients, at all levels, compromises access to quality care. In addition, indigenous peoples are often discriminated against in health centers by non-indigenous staff. Too often, indigenous people harbour both a fear and distrust for the health care system brought about by the attitudes and behaviours of healthcare workers and government officials.²⁶

Section 3: Country Policies

All four-member states that voted against the UNDRIP (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States) originated as colonies of the United Kingdom, and have large non-indigenous immigrant majorities and small indigenous populations. Since then, all four

²³Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous People's Issues. "The Health of Indigenous Peoples."

²⁴Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous People's Issues. "The Health of Indigenous Peoples."

²⁵Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous People's Issues. "The Health of Indigenous Peoples."

²⁶Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous People's Issues. "The Health of Indigenous Peoples."



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countries have endorsed the declaration in some informal way in which it would not actually become binding law in their national courts.

Stephen Corry, Director of the international indigenous rights organization Survival International said,

"The declaration has been debated for nearly a quarter century. Years, which have seen many tribal peoples, such as the Akuntsu and Kanoê in Brazil, decimated and others, such as the Innu in Canada, brought to the edge. Governments that oppose it are shamefully fighting against the human rights of their most vulnerable peoples. Claims they make to support human rights in other areas will be seen as hypocritical."²⁷

Australia's Mal Brough, Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and of partial Australian Aboriginal ancestry, referring to the provision regarding the upholding of indigenous peoples' customary legal systems, said that, "There should only be one law for all Australians and we should not enshrine in law practices that are not acceptable in the modern world."²⁸

The Canadian government said that while it supported the "spirit" of the declaration, it contained elements that were "fundamentally incompatible with Canada's Constitutional Framework, which includes both the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and Section 35, which enshrines aboriginal and treaty rights."²⁹

In 2007 New Zealand's Minister of Maori Affairs described the Declaration as "toothless", and said, "There are four provisions we have problems with, which make the declaration fundamentally incompatible with New Zealand's constitutional and legal arrangements."³⁰

Speaking for the United States mission to the UN, spokesman Benjamin Chang said, "What was done today is not clear. The way it stands now is subject to multiple interpretations and doesn't establish a clear universal principle." The U.S. mission also issued a floor document, "Observations of the United States with respect to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples", setting out its objections to the Declaration.³¹

Section 4: Possible Solutions

²⁷ Survival International. "After 22 years, UN votes on indigenous peoples declaration."

²⁸ BBC News. "Indigenous rights outlined by UN." 2007.

²⁹ BBC News. "Indigenous rights outlined by UN." 2007.

³⁰ Scoop Parliament. "Māori Party's head in the clouds." New Zealand's Independent News Media.

³¹ Krissah Thompson. "U.S. will sign U.N. declaration on rights of native people, Obama tells tribes." *The Washington Post*, December 16, 2010.



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This assembly should aim to primarily address expanding the outreach of national health systems to provide holistic health and education programs geared specifically for a nation's indigenous population. These programs should focus on tackling immediate support for communities destroyed by mental illness and suicide; they should ensure treatment for and prevention of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria, as well as guarantee the availability of trained personnel during and after pregnancy to reduce infant and mother mortality. As well, incorporating indigenous healers and cultural healing practices is imperative in implementing successful programs and policies. Treatment and support centers should aim to be geographically accessible, affordable, and non-discriminating.

Questions to Consider

- How can western medicine and traditional indigenous healing practices be merged to effectively treat and reduce the number of TB and malaria patients while still being respectful of indigenous culture and heritage?
- How can the lives of indigenous youth be supported and encouraged in their home, in their school, and in their community, to reduce the high numbers of depression now and for future generations?

Further Research

- The State of the World's Indigenous People
 - http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP/en/SOWIP_web.pdf
- The State of the World's Indigenous People –Indigenous People's Access to Health Services
 - <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2016/Docs-updates/The-State-of-The-Worlds-Indigenous-Peoples-2-WEB.pdf>
- United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Recommendations Database
 - http://esa.un.org/dspdEsa/unpfiiidata/UNPFII_Recommendations_Database_list.asp?TargetPageNumber=1&action=Search&lang=&orderBy=4&dir=&PageSize=20&masterkey=&SearchField=Full+Text&SearchOption=Contains&SearchFor=&PageSizeSelect=20
- Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous People's Issues -The Health of Indigenous Peoples
 - http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/68/pdf/wcip/IASG_Thematic_paper_Health.pdf
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
 - http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
 - http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

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Krissah Thompson. "U.S. will sign U.N. declaration on rights of native people, Obama tells tribes." *The Washington Post*, December 16, 2010.

Scoop Parliament. "Māori Party's head in the clouds." New Zealand's Independent News Media. Last modified September 14, 2007. <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0709/S00272.htm>.

Survival International. "After 22 years, UN votes on indigenous peoples declaration." Survival International. Last modified September 10, 2007. <http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/2499>.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "The State of the World's Indigenous People." *The State of the World's Indigenous People*, 2009, 155-183. http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP/en/SOWIP_web.pdf.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "Indigenous People's Access to Health Services." *The State of the World's Indigenous People*, 2016, 2-9. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2016/Docs-updates/The-State-of-The-Worlds-Indigenous-Peoples-2-WEB.pdf>.

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. "Recommendations Database." United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. n.d. http://esa.un.org/dspdEsa/unpfiiidata/UNPFII_Recommendations_Database_list.asp?TargetPageNumber=1&action=Search&lang=&orderby=4&dir=&PageSize=20&masterkey=&SearchField=Full+Text&SearchOption=Contains&SearchFor=&PageSizeSelect=20.

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York, New York: United Nations, 2008.

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Last modified October 2007.

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs326/en/>.



Topic 2: Indigenous Land Rights, Climate Change impacts and Environmental Protection of Resources

Indigenous people reside in over 70 countries worldwide, usually in remote places where climate change and natural disaster are more ravaged to other places. Most of today's indigenous people rely on subsistence economy, mostly relying on nature and natural resources such as wildlife to complement their housing, food or clothing, which will suffer the consequences of climate change. Therefore, as climate change worsen, indigenous people's health, food security and living conditions will be worst. While indigenous people have an extensive knowledge of their lands, in the case of climate change it is not useful as, in their whole history, they never had to face this situation. Moreover, this situation makes them unable to cope with the climate change only relying on their knowledge and they either have to relocate or access modern technologies and practices to cope with it. However, indigenous people usually live way below the living standards, even if they are in the richest places in the world, which limit their access to basic human rights such as education, health care, land tenure and security.³²

The current debate over climate change is illustrated by rather two extreme point of view, one pessimistic announcing that humanity will have to face extreme catastrophes, the other one rather optimistic arguing that humanity has overcome greater challenges before. In this debate however, one have to include the indigenous people that, as mentioned before, will be the first touched by the consequences of climate change. Hence one solution could be to reduce the anthropological effect on ecosystems by involving indigenous communities that know significantly more about their local ecosystem than the modern world. By combining those two factors our society will be able to conserve ecosystems almost intact while privileging the conservation of our values and culture.

One of the challenges that will be faced is while conservation is the most effective solution, it will impede the extraction of natural resources such as gold, coal, wood, oil etc. that are frequently present on indigenous lands. These extraction impoverish the lands but also destroy the sacred sites and the ecosystems unique to each parts of the world.

Another is that indigenous people face eviction from their native territories in the name of conservation. One challenge facing delegates is the inclusion of conservation of the environment, while maintaining the needs of indigenous communities at the same time, as well as implementing indigenous traditional knowledge (ITK) within your policies. While most natural conservation today do not involve indigenous people's rights, because most of the proposals are made by environmentalist that do not go beyond conservation, there are some examples, such as the Sangha-Trinational that keep on improving the protection of the forest while incorporating indigenous rights.³³

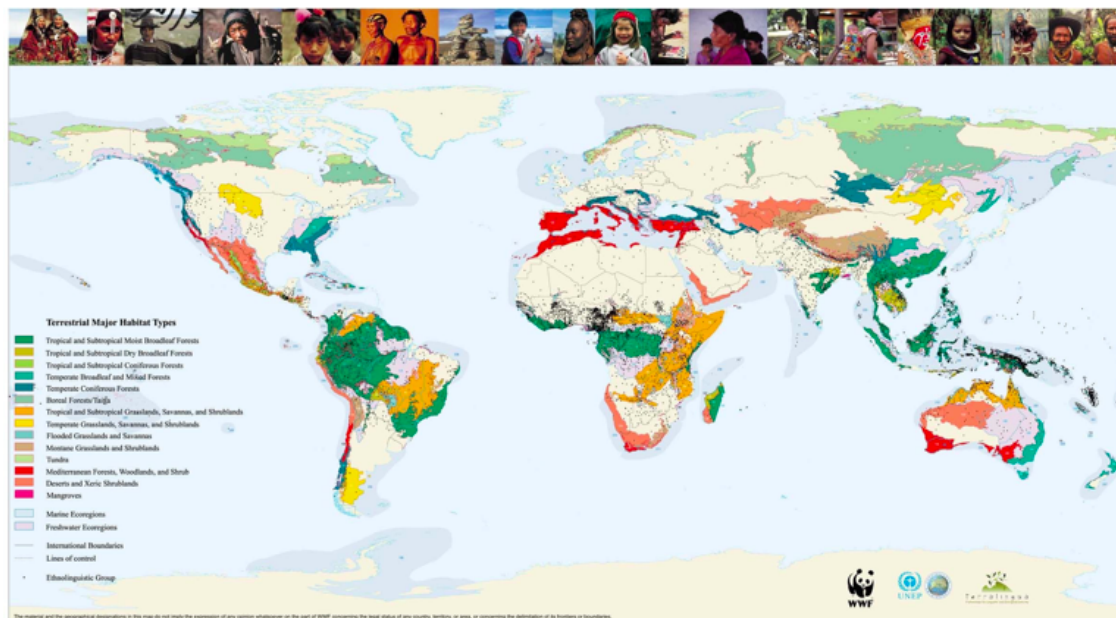
³² Arctic Indigenous Peoples, Climate Change Impacts, and Adaptation." EInternational Relations. http://www.e-ir.info/2014/04/10/arctic-indigenous-peoples-climate-change-impacts-and-adaptation/#_ftn1.

³³ "World Heritage List." UNESCO World Heritage Centre -. Accessed August 11, 2016. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>.

The aim behind this topic is to promote indigenous rights by respecting their land rights, conserving their environment by involving them in the process and making sure that they are adapting to the climate change consequences.



Indigenous and Traditional Peoples in the Global 200 Ecoregions



The Millennium Development Goals

Section 1: Background Information

The Effects of Climate Change on Indigenous People and their Environment

For example, indigenous people in the Arctic have to face the consequences of greenhouse gas emissions that are melting the Arctic. As a result, they have to adapt very quickly to the melting ice by migrating, finding new places to hunt and fish, adapting their clothes and means of transportation. While indigenous people's knowledge of their local territories is extensive, they never had to face a climate that changes that quickly and adapt as quickly. Because climate change alter the snow cover and thawing permafrost are of greater consequences than for example, retreating sea ice, as it disturb traditional livelihoods, such as reindeer herding, and challenging the availability of food for the reindeer.³⁴

The Misrepresentation of Indigenous People in Decision Making Procedures

³⁴ Arctic Indigenous Peoples, Climate Change Impacts, and Adaptation." EInternational Relations. http://www.e-ir.info/2014/04/10/arctic-indigenous-peoples-climate-change-impacts-and-adaptation/#_ftn1.



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One of the most important problems is that indigenous people are usually misrepresented, by either not recognizing their existence or marginalizing them within civil society by limiting their rights, within their countries which leads to situations where the governments allow foreign corporations to profit from their natural resources in exchange, most of the time, for bribes. With the increase of droughts and rainfalls because of climate change, those communities are becoming more prone to extreme food shortages with limited ability to cope it. It has been shown that deforestation rates inside conserved forests with strong legal recognition and government protection are dramatically lower than in forests outside those areas. Indigenous rights on their land have always been threatened, but most recently it became more prevalent as resources are becoming scarcer and that corporations are searching for new land with more natural resources to exploit, even if it means destroying the local environment and displacing people. Thus, climate change and environment are directly linked to indigenous people's stake in the conflict and the problem is now becoming more urgent as climate change's impact increases via extreme natural events.³⁵

Unfortunately, this is a common issue all around the world, but most specifically in regions where there are natural resources to exploit, thus especially in Africa and South America.

Today, this situation still represents an obstacle because there is no concrete punishment nor a binding element for corporations or government when they do not respect indigenous land rights. Another striking problem is the fact that most of the countries do not recognize their indigenous people which engenders different consequences such as the lack of education within indigenous communities, the lack of consideration of indigenous people's situation in state matters, the lack of representation at parliaments and no respect of their rights. Therefore indigenous people are unable to represent themselves or make their voices heard. That is why Non Governmental Organizations now exist to help those communities' voice heard during UN conferences or within their government, while enabling those communities with basic human rights education and preservation of their culture while facing external pressures. When Indigenous people and local communities have no or weak legal rights, their forests tend to be vulnerable to deforestation. Studies have demonstrated that Indigenous people and local communities with legal forest rights maintain or improve their forests' carbon storage. For example, government protection of the forest rights of communities in Niger added 200 million new trees, absorbing 30 million tonnes of carbon over the past 30 years. Support for community forestry in Nepal has improved forest health and generated a carbon stock of more than 180 million tonnes across 1.6 million hectares. Even when communities have legal rights to their forest, government actions that undermine those rights can lead to high carbon dioxide emissions and deforestation.³⁶

³⁵ "Securing Rights, Combating Climate Change." World Resources Institute. Web. <https://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/securingrights_executive_summary.pdf>.

³⁶ "Securing Rights, Combating Climate Change." World Resources Institute. Web. <https://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/securingrights_executive_summary.pdf>.



Therefore if there are no strong legal rights framing for the governance of forests and indigenous people, both deforestation and indigenous people's marginalization will amplify. It should be encouraged to respect indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices since it contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment. By complying governments to protect their indigenous people and their lands, it will both push for culture and natural conservation, which at the end is beneficial for the environment.

Section 2: Past Actions

Policies

One of the most important documents regarding indigenous rights is the 2007 UN Declaration that aimed to protect indigenous rights regarding different topic areas, including their right to "own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess" and also protect these lands³⁷

However, one of the main critiques of this declaration was about the right to access natural resources and lands for the corporations and the government at the expense of the indigenous people, which still represent a major issue in several of countries having indigenous people. For example, in Latin America, and more particularly in the Amazon region, deforestation is threatening indigenous people's lives and territory, as well as threatening the local environment and ecosystem. In Peru, the exploitation of the mines are destroying the indigenous people's lands as well as polluting their soils and water which push them to immigrate to other regions and therefore abandon their ancestral lands. In some parts of Africa, such as the region of the Great Lakes, gold mining is representing the same threat as in Peru on Indigenous people.).³⁸

This declaration of indigenous rights led to many other programs that have been developed to increase indigenous representation at UN conference as well as begin active monitoring of indigenous rights, prevention of genocides and conserve native environment. One of them is Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) that was established by the Human Rights Council, the UN's main human rights body, in 2007 under Resolution 6/36 as a subsidiary body of the Council.

What the UN Declaration of Indigenous People rights offers is the basic legal structure to human rights and other important factors. The articles that will be the most useful to this Topic inside this committee are:³⁹

"Article 10

³⁷ Article 26. United Nations. General Assembly. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. New York, N.Y.: United Nations, 2007. Print. http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

³⁸ "General assembly adopts declaration on rights of indigenous peoples; 'major step forward' towards human rights for all, says president" | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." UN News Center. UN, 13 Sept. 2007. Web. <<http://www.un.org/press/en/2007/ga10612.doc.htm>>.

³⁹ United Nations. General Assembly. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. New York, N.Y.: United Nations, 2007. Print. http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf



Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return.

Article 26

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources, which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
2. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.
3. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

Article 29

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programs for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.

Article 30

1. Military activities shall not take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples, unless justified by a relevant public interest or otherwise freely agreed with or requested by the indigenous peoples concerned.
2. States shall undertake effective consultations with the indigenous peoples concerned, through appropriate procedures and in particular through their representative institutions, prior to using their lands or territories for military activities.”

International Organizations

As exists major UN committees, agencies, programs and funds operate to create a major impact regarding indigenous peoples. The main committees are the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII); the UNPFII is a UN's central coordinating body for matters relating to the rights of the world's indigenous peoples. It is an advisory body and submits recommendations to the UN Economic and Social Council. UNESCO also works with indigenous peoples when it deals with preserving their culture and their historical heritage, especially during session of the committees about the World Heritage Center. For example, this year at the UNPFII one of the important tasks for African countries was to secure the unity of indigenous people around Africa to ensure smooth communication between countries. This in particular will have an impact on the conservation of the Sangha Trinational, the second largest forest on earth, that is separated between the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroun and Congo, as communications between the three countries will help coordinate the conservation of the lands as well as the protection of the Indigenous people.



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Most of the work on Indigenous rights comes from the OHCHR, Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, by hosting EMRIP, funding the UN Voluntary Indigenous Rights, monitoring data and studies about indigenous communities of the world as well as predicting indigenous genocide through data analysis.

One major conferences relating to both Indigenous rights and climate change are all Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences (UNCCC) and also all conferences of the UNFCCC, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The UNCCC is a yearly conference held by the UNFCCC and serve as a formal meeting to assess progress in dealing with climate change, environmental protection, sustainable development and renewable energies. The UNFCCC leads conferences such as the COP but also includes conferences such as, The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) which is significant in terms of environmental matters and indigenous rights, as it is an international organization working in the field of nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. It is involved in data gathering and analysis, field projects, programs, lobbying and education. The IUCN therefore is more of an advising body, nonetheless less important than the work of the UNFCCC, while the UNFCCC is in charge of regulating conferences on climate change and the environment, as well as the follow up of these conferences and the resulting treaties.

The United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) also enable Indigenous people representation, as part of an observer, to be able to follow and advise on the protection of their lands. For example, the annual meeting of UNESCO World Heritage Centre allowed for the Sangha Trinational in the Congo basin to be recognized as a world heritage site, allowing natural conservation and indigenous people's land protection.⁴⁰

NGOs

Many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) exist to monitor and contribute to the evolution of indigenous human rights. Usually these NGOs are specialized by regions of the world or by topics, for example about conservation of their culture and traditional practices. A non exhaustive list of those NGOs are represented here:

- Assembly of First Nations (AFN)
- Amazon Watch
- Congress of Aboriginal People (CAP)
- Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin (COICA)
- Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE)
- Cultural Survival
- Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN)
- Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-coordinating Committee (IPACC)
- Indigenous Peoples Council on Bio colonialism (IPCB)

⁴⁰ "World Heritage List." UNESCO World Heritage Centre -. Accessed August 11, 2016. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>.



- International
Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)
 - Native American Rights Fund (NARF)
 - National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC)
 - Survival International and the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO).

Other organizations that are not specifically related to indigenous people but more to natural conservation also play a key part in the conservation of indigenous people's ecosystem. World Wide Fund (WWF) for example monitor many programs of natural conservation that also value indigenous people's rights within conservation site and also indigenous people's knowledge of the local lands. For example, they have programs around Africa (Sangha Trinational, Aïr et Ténéré, Namibia), South America (Orinoco Basin), Asia (Nepal, Borneo) and Oceania.⁴¹

Most of these NGOs work with indigenous people on the ground by providing them basic concepts of human rights on lands and resources. They also help them develop in a sustainable way, in order to preserve their ecosystem and at the same time becoming less dependent on external resources. At a bigger level, NGOs are source of information for governments and usually represent a mediator between those communities and bigger institutions by providing a developed network. For example, NGOs can provide information that will complement and improve today's actions and treaties to protect indigenous people's rights. For example, to protect the Tuvalu islands and people, the lack of data still represent a major impediment to conservation and implementing adaptation strategies. Therefore, NGOs could represent a key element in the future by providing data and elements that would help both natural conservation and indigenous people's right protection.

However, even with international organizations and NGOs, spin off issues are still not adequately solved by the work above of policies. One of the key problems is the lack of recognition from the government of the indigenous communities, which usually cost them to be forgotten or worst victims of governmental decisions. While NGOs have improved indigenous representation in international organizations and helped the communities, at the local level, by providing educational support in terms of human rights education.

Section 3: Country Policies & Possible Solutions

The optimal direction in which this committee should head towards is discussing this topic to allow improvement of indigenous people's representation and recognition in matter of their lands and protection of their environment. What it is being expected from the delegates of this committee is to find a compromise for all nations to acknowledge the existence of their indigenous people, give them a voice in their institutions, develop a legal structure to protect them with rights and provide a legal framework to protect their lands in order for them to cope with the effect of climate change and protect their culture.

⁴¹ "WWF - Endangered Species Conservation." WorldWildlife.org. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/>.



You are expected to find a way to both benefit indigenous communities and the environment in order to preserve both while limiting the impact of big corporations and finding replacement to the natural resources lost.

The most important sub issues that delegates should address is to provide indigenous people and local communities with legal recognition of their lands, to prohibit any deterioration of their lands or forced migration. Declaring zero-tolerance on land grabbing could accomplish this. Another one could be to compensate communities for the climate and other benefits provided by their forest such as access to complementary sources of food and clothing. Another sub issue that should be address is to support communities with technical assurance and training[DD5] such as providing monitoring systems and new technologies helping the indigenous people to cop with climate change. One last sub issue that could be addressed is to include the protection of Indigenous Peoples and Community Land Rights – as a pillar of national sustainable development strategies, including those related to climate change, agriculture, environmental conservation, energy, tourism, economic growth and trade.

Other sub issues however have to be address and account for as well, such as to engage forest communities in decision-making on investments affecting their forest and protect the legal forest rights of communities. Another sub issue could be to secure the collective land rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and recognize data and maps produced through community-based monitoring systems. One sub issue could also be to carry out a global thematic review on land rights across all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through an assessment of the area of land legally recognized as owned or controlled by Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

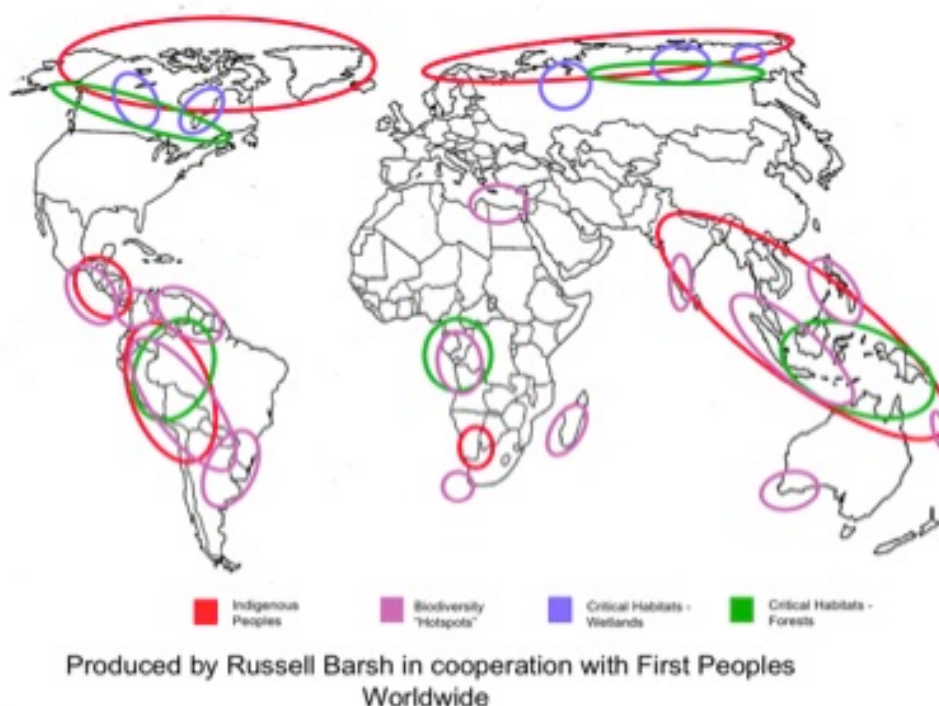
Section 4: Bloc Positions

Geographical Divide

The map produced by Russal Barsh shows that most of the critical habitats-forests are also inhabited by Indigenous Peoples, as well as critical habitats wetlands and biodiversity ‘hotspots’(which are regions with significant biodiversity threaten by humans). This map shows one of the challenges the delegates will face is the combination of natural conservation and indigenous people human rights, as natural conservation of all the critical habitats also implies to protect the indigenous people living in those areas.. Thus, countries having access to those critical habitats will have to face higher structural adjustments than other countries as they face additional challenges. For example, Canada will face additional challenge compared to the United States because their indigenous people in the wetlands will have to adapt to sea rise, ocean acidification, melting of sea ice, etc.

Economic Divide

The range of economic growth amongst all countries varies significantly. At one end of the spectrum it has developed countries such as the United States and Canada and on the other it has the poorest countries such as Bolivia or Democratic Republic of Congo. Given their higher GDP, countries like Canada are able to invest in solutions but also have a more developed legal structure, which is not usually the case for less developed countries that lack of strong legal institutions. Countries already recognizing their indigenous people and protecting their rights have an important advantage compared to countries such as Cameroon where indigenous people are not recognized. Not



recognizing the indigenous people legally prohibits any economic and social protection of the people, which limit their development and their integration within the society. As a result, not all countries can afford to invest in environmental protection, social plans and legal structure as less developed countries might need more time and means to put it in place first to then be able to develop it later.

Political Divide

While most of the world countries have ratified the UN Indigenous Rights declaration of 2007, Canada, Australia and the United States took longer to ratify it and first voted against. While these countries have a high percentage of indigenous people, they are not well represented but rather marginalized and their lands are taken over very easily. While countries like Bolivia where there is an abundant percentage of the population that is indigenous, a lot of improvement has been seen. These divisions amongst countries remain a potential impairment to the improvement of indigenous rights and environmental protection. In the example of the conservation of the Sangha Trinational in



the Congo basin, the DRC, the Congo and the Cameroon are at different stages of indigenous people's existence and rights recognition. Thus, this difference might delay or impede the protection of natural habitats of the indigenous people.

Further Considerations

1. How can the protection of Indigenous Peoples be incorporated in Land Rights and protection?
2. What obstacles will your country face if providing full legal structure to indigenous people?

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General assembly adopts declaration on rights of indigenous peoples; 'major step forward' towards human rights for all, says president" | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." *UN News Center*. UN, 13 Sept. 2007. Web. <<http://www.un.org/press/en/2007/ga10612.doc.htm>>.

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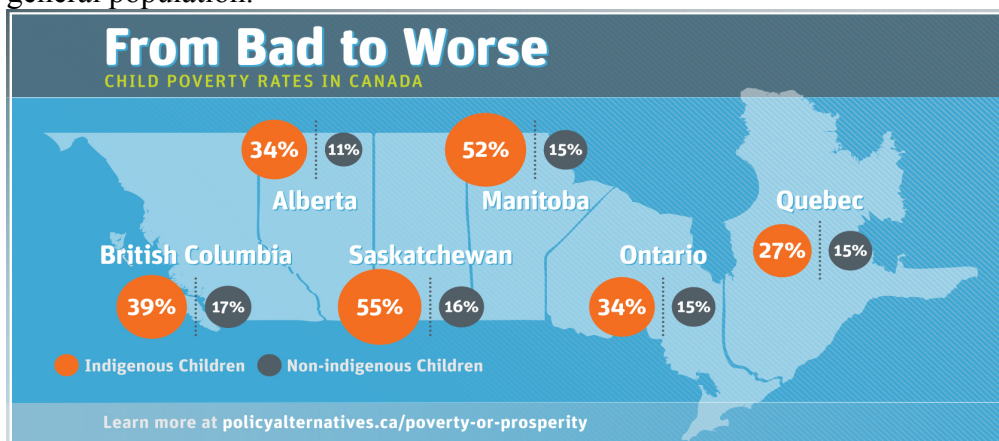
Topic 3: Indigenous Peoples, Poverty, and Development

Section 1: Background Information

Indigenous people are among the most consistently marginalized groups in the world, facing widespread discrimination and hardship that is the direct result of generations of systematic and social racism, targeted genocide (both cultural and physical), and a radical and sudden shift in traditional ways of living.

As a result, indigenous communities are among the poorest in the world. Often, government spending cuts, natural disaster, and globalization impacts these communities the most. The scale of the disaster in Canada alone is terrifying. One-half of Canadian First Nations children live below the poverty line, according to recent reports, with the figure reaching as high as two thirds in parts of Saskatchewan and Manitoba—a rate that is more than four times the national average for non-First Nations youth⁴².

Furthermore, 13.6% of food bank users across Canada are indigenous, despite comprising only 4% of the total population—a real usage rate more than three times the expected rate. Indigenous communities are disproportionately affected by nutrition-related illnesses, such as childhood obesity and diabetes, which can further limit education and employment rates, as well as drain local coffers. Food insecurity for Canadian First Nations persons, both on and off of reserves, ranges from 21% to 83%, compared to only 3%-9% for all other (non-FNMI) Canadians—a rate more than seven times that of the general population.⁴³

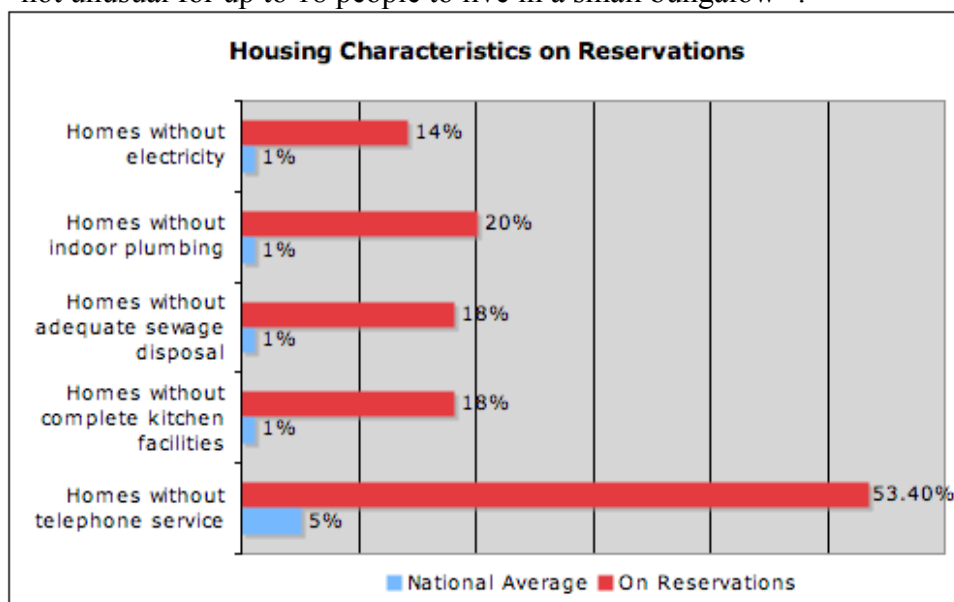


As many as 37% of on-reserve housing units are in need of major repairs, with many more in need of minor attention. But with First Nations housing already short by between 35,000 and 85,000 units Canada-wide, lack of funding is proving a major and constant

⁴² “Half of First Nations children live in poverty,” Amber Hildebrandt (CBC). Accessed 20 June 2016. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/half-of-first-nations-children-live-in-poverty-1.1324232>

⁴³ “Reducing Poverty in Canada,” Canadian Feed the Children. Accessed 20 June 2016. <http://www.canadianfeedthechildren.ca/where/canada>

hurdle, and overcrowding is running rampant. A government inquiry declared that it is “not unusual for up to 18 people to live in a small bungalow⁴⁴.”



Education is also of notable concern. Funding for First Nations schooling, including more than 518 schools and at least 45 tertiary educational institutions, is provided by the federal government—as opposed to the individual provinces, as is the case with off-reservation institutions. The result is that \$2000 less per student per year is spent on First Nations education than elsewhere in Canada. This lack of funding only restricts the means for educators to begin re-establishing trust with a community that lives with the trauma of the residential school system in living memory.

First Nations funding for tertiary education is under the jurisdiction of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), but again sees itself severely underfunded: in 2009, more than 5,000 otherwise eligible, high-achieving First Nations students were turned down for funding and bursaries for tertiary education⁴⁵.

Finally, social and family dynamics among Canada’s FNMI communities, thrown into chaos by aggressive colonization and systematic genocide at the hands of the British (later British North American, followed by Canadian) government, in partnership with (and under the administration of) the three largest Christian institutions of the time in North America; the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and United churches. The consequences of the failure by the government of Canada, and indeed by the broader Canadian society, to make adequate reparations following the harm of the initial indigenous genocide and subsequent horrors of residential schools continue to be felt by indigenous youth today—54% of indigenous youth are in the care of government agencies, 41% of youth living off

⁴⁴ On-Reserve Housing and Infrastructure: Recommendations for Change,” Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples. Accessed 20 June 2016. <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/412/appa/rms/12jun15/home-e.htm>

⁴⁵ “Canada’s Aboriginal Education Crisis,” Robert Laboucane. Accessed 20 June 2016. <http://www.ammsa.com/publications/windspeaker/canada%E2%80%99s-aboriginal-education-crisis-column>



reserve and 58% living on reserve fail to graduate from high school, and the national pre-grade 12 dropout rate sits at 51%⁴⁶.

Widespread food insecurity, crowded and often dangerous housing conditions, proportionally lower funding for all levels of education, lack of tertiary education bursaries, the trauma of cultural and physical genocide followed by decades of residential schooling, and a secondary graduation rate of less than half all contribute to a climate in which even the most exceptional, outstanding indigenous students are trapped in poverty—despite possessing skills that many non-FNMI students in the wider Canadian society lack.

While the case study for this topic is focused on the Canadian context, indigenous communities across the world face widespread poverty and lower-than-average standards of living. The Dayak people point to seven (opposing) sets of principles (cultural/modern):

- Sustainability/Productivity
- Collectivity/Individuality
- Naturality/Engineered
- Spirituality/Rationality
- Process/Result
- Subsistence/Commerciality
- Customary law/State law

Section 2: Previous Actions

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) was established by the United Nations with a mandate to represent the more than 370 million indigenous people in the world today, but despite some discussion of its creation at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights it wasn't until July of 2000 that the Forum was officially formed. Nine sessions have been held to date, with the first in 2002 and the latest occurring in 2012.

The Forum currently follows the standard state-level grouping of the United Nations (Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Europe and other countries) but representatives are nominated to represent one of the following seven sociocultural regions⁴⁷:

- Africa
- Asia
- Central and South America and the Caribbean
- The Arctic
- Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia, and Transcaucasia
- North America

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ "Handbook for Participants," United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Accessed 20 June 2016. https://esango.un.org/event/documents/handbook_participants_en.pdf



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- The Pacific

The Forum is comprised of 16 members, of which eight are nominated by member governments (and elected to office by the Economic and Social Council—ECOSOC) and eight are nominated by various indigenous organizations (and appointed by the President of ECOSOC).

The UNPFII has no direct legislative or executive authority, however, and issues only recommendatory resolutions to the General Assembly or Security Council.

There has been a remarkable lack of practical action undertaken at the international level with respect to indigenous empowerment. The most significant resolution to gain U.N. approval is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which—as a resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations—is not a legally binding document. Passed in 2007 with only four votes against, UNDRIP does, however, set the tone of international attitude toward indigenous issues and, by many indigenous groups, is seen as intensely symbolically important. The four votes against, incidentally, were by four countries with some of the most troubling histories of systematic cultural and physical genocide of indigenous peoples' within their territories: Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand; and does little to directly address the dire economic situation of indigenous communities and youth across the world. Additionally, there is concern surrounding language in the document that can be interpreted as a sidestepping of responsibility to action (e.g. “right to remain distinct and to pursue their own visions of economic and social development”).

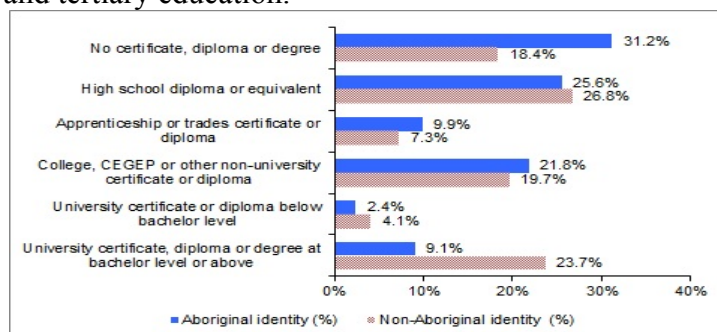
The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues did release a report during its fourth session in 2004 entitled “Indigenous Peoples and the Millennium Development Goals,” which—while notably stopping short of mandating or legislating change—has set some framework for future government and international action.

The UNPFII report stresses the following as potential areas of resolution for the cycle of poverty seen in indigenous communities worldwide⁴⁸:

- The ‘debt trap’: working toward debt forgiveness and debt arbitration for countries trapped in the so-called debt trap, as through the Highly-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are a cause for hope, but indigenous leaders have been excluded from the processes at almost every stage. High-debt countries and municipalities often turn to indigenous funding and support as the first areas to apply cuts to in funding.
- Data disaggregation: in particular as it applies to the Millennium Development Goals for indigenous peoples but also with respect to gender, race, religion, ethnicity, and geography. Current data for tracking progress toward the MDGs and other U.N. objectives tends to aggregate to each individual nation, but not to subcategories therein. The 1996 report, for example, lists Mexico as forty-eighth

⁴⁸ “Indigenous Peoples and the Millennium Development Goals,” Secretariat of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Accessed 20 June 2016.
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/Indigenous%20Peoples%20and%20the%20MDGs.pdf>

- on the list of nations by Human Development Index, but if its indigenous population were excluded it would come in at twenty-ninth. This indicates a significant disparity between indigenous and non-indigenous Mexican nationals, but current U.N. measures do not reflect this.
- Indigenous groups will need to be further involved in national and international decision-making processes, lest culturally insensitive aid programs contribute to the problems they seek to address.
 - Poverty reduction strategies need to be adopted into national and international law, in particular by United Nations resolution.
 - Systematic training on indigenous peoples' rights will need to be undertaken by civil servants, international organizations, NGOs, and donor agencies.
 - Universal primary education must become a priority, but development must happen in concert with and led by indigenous leaders, educators, and activists, with resources in place to stimulate return to communities by graduates with secondary and tertiary education.



Outside of the United Nations, several private not-for-profit organizations and NGOs are engaged in the struggle against indigenous poverty. The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), an association that holds consultative status with the U.N. ECOSOC as well as observer status with the Arctic Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and is primarily funded by the Nordic Ministries of Foreign Affairs and European Union, has attempted to address the crisis through regional and thematic programmes on human rights and publication of indigenous materials⁴⁹. It has not, however, been immediately active or successful in combatting poverty.

The World Council of Indigenous Peoples, dissolved in 1996 due to internal conflict, mobilized significant attention and resources toward combatting the two causes it saw as particularly responsible for continuing indigenous poverty: weak indigenous land rights, and exploitative transnational corporations⁵⁰. However, as a non-legislative body, WCIP was unable to make direct headway beyond recommendations to the United Nations and, since its dissolution, has not been actively replaced.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN, in 2012 adopted a resolution entitled "Indigenous Women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication" that calls for

⁴⁹ "About IWGIA," International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. Accessed 20 June 2016. <http://www.iwgia.org/>

⁵⁰ "Resolutions and Papers," Center for World Indigenous Studies. Accessed 20 June 2016. <http://cwis.org/GML/TribalAndInter-TribalResolutionsAndPapers/WCIP.php>



the economic empowerment of indigenous women as a means of combatting poverty⁵¹. As with other non-governmental groups outside of the U.N., however, IUCN lacks the authority to implement the resolution's 10 objectives for empowerment of indigenous women and communities.

Section 3: Recommended Committee Objectives

While much of the framework for the fight against indigenous poverty exists already thanks to the work of NGOs, advisory groups, government reports, and other external organizations, there exists a pressing need for clear, consistent legislation and a worldwide movement toward implementation of a policy of indigenous empowerment led by indigenous leaders and provided sufficient funding to achieve stated objectives. This committee should set the following objectives:

- Implementation of a plan for indigenous economic empowerment that takes into account of previous recommendations by NGOs and advisory groups, particularly of groups led or prominently advised by Indigenous leaders and/or communities
- Implementation of a plan for resource and funding allocation by the international community, instituting rigid minimum funding limits in accordance with government spending on the general population.
- Plans for universal education of indigenous people at the primary and secondary levels, expanded or universal funding for tertiary education of indigenous students, universal, comprehensive, and adequately-funded healthcare for indigenous communities, and access to mental health resources above and beyond those available to the general population to address the trans-generational impact of colonization and genocide of indigenous peoples.

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⁵¹ "Indigenous Women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication," International Union for Conservation of Nature. Accessed 20 June 2016. <http://www.iucn.org/content/indigenous-women-key-actors-poverty-and-hunger-eradication>



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