

Special Session on Indigenous Affairs
The Russian Federation
Indigenous Peoples, Healthcare, Mental Health and Wellness

Lack of access to healthcare and increased need for mental health care is an obvious problem in indigenous communities. Not only do indigenous populations lack access to resources that help treat medical ailments, they lack access to preventative health resources, as well. The Russian Federation is dedicated to alleviating these issues, particularly through education, nutrition, and health facilities in rural and urban areas.

Indigenous populations across the globe consistently face more health issues than their non indigenous counterparts. Substance abuse, alcoholism in particular, is a massive issue for many indigenous populations. In Australia, indigenous populations between the ages of 35 and 54 are up to 8 times more likely to die than their non indigenous counterparts, largely due to the widespread alcoholism¹ that is common in these communities. AIDS is also a massive issue; in Canada alone, 43% of new diagnoses from 2009-2011 were indigenous populations². In context of mental illness, suicide is the cause of death for about 33% of native americans³, while it is only 13.4% for non indigenous americans⁴.

In order to address the problem of addiction and substance abuse in rural areas, the Russian Federation would like to propose rural rehabilitation facilities. These facilities would be placed in pre existing infrastructure, which will eliminate the need for new infrastructure, and allow the placement of facilities where they are most easily accessible to the targeted population. The facilities would also be staffed by licensed professionals, who would be most qualified to help patients move through both the rehabilitation process, and provide care for any underlying mental health issues. These workers would work under a two year contract, in order to provide stability for patients and guarantee the effectiveness of a smoothly run operation. Russia would also like to suggest the proliferation of inhalers in order to administer drugs used to treat tuberculosis. This would be the most helpful because not only are inhalers the most cost effective, they are also the easiest to use. Inhalers do not require the help of a medical professional for administration, so indigenous populations can self administer the necessary medication. Small children may also be more comfortable with an inhaler than any other kind of treatment, as it can be seen as less invasive and therefore easier to accept.

¹ Davey, Melissa. "Alcohol Abuse behind High Rates of Early Death among Indigenous, Study Finds." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 20 Feb. 2015. Web. 2016.

² Ellis, Brooke. "The Current State of the HIV Epidemic Among Aboriginal People in Ontario." (n.d.): n. pag. May 2014. Web. 2016.

³ "Native American Communities and Mental Health." Mental Health America. N.p., n.d. Web. 2016.

⁴ "Suicide and Self-Inflicted Injury." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 06 Oct. 2016. Web. 2016.

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Indigenous Land Rights, Climate Change Impacts, and Environmental Protection of Resources

Despite being specifically prohibited in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples⁵, indigenous populations are still exploited and abused for the lands and resources. This is the fault of not only the companies attempting to exploit indigenous populations, but also governments who do not act upon their behalf. The Russian Federation therefore would like to suggest economic repercussions for abusive companies, and third party organizations that act in the best interest of indigenous populations and their land rights.

A prime and recent example of indigenous peoples being exploited by companies is currently in North Dakota, U.S.A., in which a pipeline is being installed dangerously close to sacred Native American lands. The pipeline would be used to transport oil, and it threatens the safety of sacred Native American lands, as well as their current water supply. The decision to install the pipeline was made without the consent or consultation of tribal governments. Peaceful protests by Native Americans were introduced, but they were met with a militarized police force. This police force has been accused of numerous human rights violations, and the United Nations have even opened an investigation over the claims⁶. This situation illustrates many of the problems indigenous populations face, amongst them being lack of representation in government and decision making, and the targeting of indigenous populations for economic exploitation by large corporations.

The Russian Federation believes that the most effective way to protect indigenous populations is through a third party international watchdog organization specifically dedicated to preserving the land rights of indigenous populations. This watchdog organization would work with indigenous populations in order to maintain their best interests, and would watch over any potentially immoral or illegal actions companies may take. This watchdog organization would study company's plans, actions, and intents, and publish their findings annually. This would be so the general public can be aware of company's actions, and companies can be held accountable for their actions. Another responsibility of this organization would be to advocate for and defend indigenous populations in a legal setting. If a company is attempting to take advantage of indigenous populations, or if indigenous populations wish to make a deal with a company, the organization would make sure that indigenous populations are treated fairly, and are given the compensation, representation, and treatment that they deserve.

⁵ "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." The United Nations(2008): n. pag. The United Nations, Mar. 2008. Web. 2016.

⁶ Levin, Sam. "Dakota Access Pipeline: The Who, What and Why of the Standing Rock Protests." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 03 Nov. 2016. Web. 2016.

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Indigenous Peoples, Poverty, and Development

Indigenous populations are known to be particularly vulnerable to poverty, largely due to exploitation by governments and corporations, as well as historical circumstances. The Russian Federation is therefore dedicated to aiding indigenous populations in their economic standing and urging development in rural areas, particularly by encouraging involvement in business operations.

Lack of access to quality education or educational programs continuously proves to be an issue in indigenous populations. This can be due to lack of access to educational infrastructure, or lack of a culturally aware curriculum. In context of educational infrastructure, education in indigenous areas often come with poor learning conditions, or teachers who are not proficient in a native language, both of which are obvious barriers. Nomadic and semi-nomadic indigenous populations face a more unique issue, in which mobile school or mobile education options are often unavailable. In context of the government's involvement, schools in indigenous areas can be disadvantaged due to the lack of awareness toward indigenous customs, languages, or skills. Governments also rarely involve indigenous leaders in the school system, which can lead to cultural clashes and insensitivity⁷, and can serve as a deterrent for children to attend school.

In order to help reduce poverty in indigenous areas, the Russian Federation would like to suggest business training and seminars for indigenous populations in more urban areas. These seminars could be held in public places at no cost in order to allow them to reach the broadest audience possible. This would be to encourage economic growth, prosperity, and allow for indigenous populations to become more involved in their communities. For indigenous populations in more rural areas, the Russian Federation would like to suggest an e-commerce partnership between indigenous groups and internet businesses. This system of e-commerce would create a partnership in which indigenous populations provide products to businesses, such as clothes, soaps, or sculptures, and these business would sell and ship these products internationally. The profit from these products would be returned directly to the indigenous providers in the form of monetary reimbursement, livestock, fresh water, education, or whatever other commodity the seller may be in need of. This would allow rural indigenous populations to become more involved in the economic system nationally and internationally, but would not force them to change any lifestyles or habits. By providing both types of business opportunities and education to different indigenous populations, we can ensure that all populations can become more economically involved in a way best fitting for them.

⁷ "Indigenous Peoples and Education." International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, n.d. Web. 2016.