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UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS



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

With the many problems indigenous peoples face today, the issue of health in Indigenous populations is an absolutely critical issue. Indigenous peoples from all countries face disproportionately higher rates of maternal and infant mortality, malnutrition, HIV/Aids, and malnutrition, and many other diseases. One of many such diseases is Tuberculosis, which is entirely preventable, is also severely affecting impoverished communities of Indigenous peoples. The root cause of many of these issues is primarily discrimination and past actions committed by colonial powers, resulting in marginalization and impoverishment of indigenous people.

In September 2007, Spain was a signatory of the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples . In Article 24 of the declaration, it reads “Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.” In May 2016, the Federation of Medicus Mundi Spain received the 2016 Sasakawa Health Prize for its 20 years of dedication serving various indigenous peoples across Latin America. Their efforts have drastically improved conditions, for example in Rabinal, Guatemala; child mortality dropped from 40.4 deaths per 1000 live births in 2013 to 14.85 deaths per 1000 live births in 2015.

The work of Federation of Medicus Mundi Spain (FAMME) was very successful in Latin America for a number of reasons. For one, they promoted the usage of indigenous languages among health workers, to better educate those in their care. In addition, health workers were able to teach indigenous women better strategies for giving birth, which would help the population be healthier overall. The delegation of Spain believes that traditional indigenous healing practices should be studied in an academic and professional medical environment in order to ensure that it actually provides its purported health benefits, and cures what it is claimed to cure.

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

Indigenous people are a very vulnerable population to climate change and its effects. Their land rights have been infringed upon in the past and it remains an important issue to uphold today. Environmental protection is critical to maintain people's health, food security, and living conditions. However, there should be a balance made between conservation and impeding extraction of important materials such as gold, coal, wood and oil.

In September 2016, King Felipe VI of Spain expresses complete support for the 2030 agenda on reducing climate change, which he regarded as a "global priority". In April 2010, Spain offered 45 million euros to the Climate change adaptation fund. This was just one part of a larger pledge to help reduce the effects of climate change in developing nations and indigenous peoples. Spain-UNEP Partnership for Protected Areas is provided funds of \$ 8 million by the Spanish government, and this program helps contribute to UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) Programme of Work.

Spain already has a stable legal structure for dealing with its native population given the fact that they make up the vast majority of the populace. In terms of indigenous minorities, Spain has an existing legal structure for dealing with the land rights of its Basque population. It has allotted autonomous communities such as Basque Country and Navarre, in which Basque people have self-determination

and political rights. In addition, all major newspapers are in the Basque language and speak from an indigenous Basque perspective in all issues relating to land rights.

Topic 3: Indigenous Peoples, Poverty, and Development

Indigenous peoples face some of the most impoverished conditions on the planet, and they face widespread discrimination and systemic racism. Neglect from the government, natural disasters and globalization has disastrously impacted these communities all over the world. Since 2007, there has been a surprising lack of United Nations resolutions that directly deal with indigenous issues and address the root cause of these problems.

Recently, the Spanish government has taken particular concern over protection of indigenous peoples in Latin America. The strategy of the Spanish government has since been to enable them to participate in international forums. In addition, most of our projects have been centred around the following: modernisation their [indigenous peoples] respective nations and strengthening their institutions, development of production and vocational training, and cultural cooperation and management training.

As previously stated, one of the best strategies taken up by the Spanish government to combat indigenous poverty, is to promote participatory politics in their respective nation states. In addition, international organizations and NGO's can use diplomacy to ensure funding pledges from the international community. The Spanish government must continue to pledge funding to alleviate poverty in indigenous communities, and promote adequate healthcare and education in Latin America in particular.

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