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Position Paper

INTRO:

There are three hundred and seventy million indigenous people in the world and they are not being represented equally in their national governments. These people who deserve the same basic human rights as every other person are being denied of them as a result of long term discrimination and social racism. Indigenous peoples are living in these harsh conditions because of the aftereffects that colonialism has left them with. Because indigenous tribes were treated with such disrespect, and their land was conquered without consideration of their well being for so many years, the mistreatment continues throughout history into modern day times.

POLAND'S PERSPECTIVE:

Although Poland has many problems concerning our indigenous peoples rights, we are working hard to enforce their rights and living conditions. Poland's indigenous people are the Romas, they are one of the poorest and most marginalized minorities in Europe, they consist of approximately twenty thousand persons. The Roma are faced with discrimination and racism on an everyday basis; and as a result, their culture is disappearing. The Polish Roma Union are trying to make some changes that will benefit their lifestyle and minimize the stigma that surrounds them, although this is being proven difficult due to the financial situation Poland is in.

TOPIC 1: Indigenous Peoples, Healthcare, Mental health, and Wellness

It is morally incorrect to deny one group of people healthcare services and the potential to live a healthy life, when it is being provided for others, yet it is happening all over the world to groups of indigenous people. Things that need to be addressed are being disregarded such as mental health of indigenous people. Rates of alcoholism, depression, drug abuse and suicide attempts are greatly more common in groups of indigenous people and they still continue to go up.

The Romas in Poland definitely suffer from lack of healthcare rights. Non Roma employees treat Roma customers with disrespect and sometimes even refuse to serve them. A prime example of this took place in the Opolskie Voyvodship, a Romani woman who needed a shot was denied one by her healthcare provider for the reason that the Romani woman was "dirty". The statement being completely false, was a direct result of the discrimination and stigma surrounding indigenous people. Romani children are also being mistreated in the Poland school systems. There has been improvement in this problem from previous years, but school children are still constantly being persecuted by classmates and teachers. Often Romani kids are being placed in special needs schools or courses just because they are having problems speaking the primary Polish language and are being classified as disabled because of this.

The resolution of the conflict in the classroom for Romani pupils is providing education programs for the kids to learn the primary Polish language, and develop a mutual respect and relationship of trust between Romani people and others. To improve health care rights for indigenous people throughout the world, the government needs to provide healthcare that indigenous people feel comfortable using. We need to incorporate indigenous healers into healthcare systems in indigenous communities so that their culture is respected, and their health and wellness is being taken care of. Lack of accessibility also needs to be put into consideration. Because these indigenous communities that need healthcare are living in severe poverty, there is a lack of transportation to get the people in need to their closest hospitals or doctors appointments. Some efforts have been done to set declarations demanding better treatment and combating of indigenous marginalization, but few improvements have actually been made to bring better healthcare services to communities of mistreated indigenous people.

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

Not only do indigenous people need protection in means of their mental and physical health, but they also need protection in the locations they reside. Natural disasters often strike the remote areas that the many indigenous tribes live. Without the resources to recover from the damage of the disaster, these people end up worse off as they were before hand. Indigenous peoples land rights are often neglected, or they are forced to move off of their native land in the name of conservation. Many indigenous tribes live in areas where natural resources are vast and the extraction of them not only destroy their sacred land but they also compromises their eco system and perhaps could make living there more dangerous. For example by the Dakota Pipeline. The Lakota people's humanity is being overlooked and they are destroying land as well as putting the people in danger.

The conflict of indigenous people being pushed off of the land they live on because the government thinks the land could be put to a better use is a relevant issue for the Roma people. In 2007 Roma/ Gypsy Travelers were forced to move off the land that their people had been living on for over two decades, to make room for the 2012 Olympic Village. Not only are they being pushed off their lands, but the housing they are being offered are not suitable for living. If a Roma goes to the Town Hall and asks for a social flat the building they would receive would most likely be in terrible condition.

To resolve this conflict specific laws need to be put in place that state what land indigenous people can and cannot be forced off of. Respect needs to be put in place for traditional and sacred lands as well as the resources that may be located on those lands. A compromise needs to be made, and the indigenous people need to be well represented when coming to a resolution.

TOPIC 3: Indigenous Peoples, Poverty, and Development

Indigenous people around the world are some of the poorest communities in the world, the lower than average living conditions in are a result of long term stigmatism and racisms and un representation in the government. Living conditions are usually unpleasant and crowded, violating healthy living standards. It's not unusual for food to be scarce in the indigenous communities because of the families poverty.

One of the main causes of poverty in the Roma communities is unemployment. The stigma around Romani people causes employers to resent or refuse hiring them and therefore leaving the majority of them unemployed. Un employment agencies aren't any help either, for they too discriminate against the peoples. When calling racists out on in humane acts the Romanis will not be trusted unless the discrimination is witnesses by a person of non Roma roots or a person of authority. This does not make for a trusting relationship between the Roma people and others, and the discrimination needs to be brought to an end.

To resolve the issue of unemployment among Roma people employers need to start accepting Roma people, as they are just as capable of doing a job as someone of non Roma roots, of the same educational and physical abilities.

CONCLUSION:

It is a continuous cycle, because of the rights and basic protection they are being denied indigenous people are amongst the poorest communities in the world. Because they are the poorest communities in the world, they are looked at in a inhumane way, and are denied rights and protection. The poverty these indigenous people are linked to is not their choice, it roots back to factors such as denied education, the degradation of their traditional lands, the racism that is thrown at them when they try to get a well paying job, government cuts and natural disasters that often occur in the places they live. If the indigenous people aren't helped and well represented in the government the cycle will continue.