Jasper Hébert

**Model United Nations Position Paper: *Italy, Indigenous Affairs***

**Historical Factors**

As in most European countries the indigenous people are in fact the most prominent members of society. In Italy, for example, the indigenous people are Italian. The only example of an oppression of native peoples, is the suppression of certain regional dialects due to the standardization of the official language as Italian in government institutions. At one time the Sardu and Franco-Provençal languages were suppressed, and the Italian language was imposed on those who spoke these language. However, this ceased to happen long ago and now these regions are in a similar situation to that of Quebec’s, where both languages are officially recognized.

**General Position**

Given that Italy was one of the original 144 countries that voted for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Italy is obviously in support of indigenous rights. In addition to this there is no reason for Italy to be opposed to indigenous rights, as their support comes at no cost to them. In short, Italy supports indigenous rights without having strong implications due to the effects that stem from potential solutions.

**Topic #1: Indigenous Healthcare Rights**

Italy, being a country that has what is regarded as one of the best healthcare systems worldwide, is absolutely in favor of public healthcare. And, Italy believes in equal access to healthcare resources for all citizens. Having their own healthcare system held to such a high standard there is no chance of hypocrisy when criticizing other systems who do not have the same standards for accessibility. In countries such as Canada where healthcare is completely socialized it is especially shameful to have exceptions when it comes to the care of indigenous peoples. It is important that the outreach to these people be increased drastically by governments worldwide. An issue however is that in countries like Canada where the indigenous population has been tricked, time and time again, by the government into programs such as residential schools, they will have a hard time trusting the government. What this means is that the programs must in no way be imposed, but simply offered. However, this creates a new problem. Simply having to ‘offer’ makes the agreement much less binding. A balance must be struck where there is a readily available, non-discriminatory, program available to the indigenous peoples that is also not pushed upon them. Italy will be a perfect country to argue for this point without being at any risk of hypocrisy and without having to sacrifice an economical price to the Italian people for doing so.

**Topic #2: Land Rights, and Climate Change Impacts**

In the Italian climate adaptation strategy, it mentions this “Dall’attenzione iniziale posta sulle misure di mitigazione finalizzate a ridurre le emissioni di gas ad effetto serra e la deforestazione, gli obiettivi di politica climatica dell’Unione Europea (UE)”. (Rosa, Martinico, Privitera) This essentially says that Italy, along with the European Union is putting their attention towards reducing the emissions which have an effect on plant life. Although earlier, in a section more specific to Italy, it says that they will have to consider the economic implications before throwing money away in an effort to solve climate change. It is also important to note however that given Italy’s position in the Mediterranean, they are in a bad position should a climate change related natural disaster occur. With all of this taken into consideration it can be inferred that Italy’s position would be in favor of helping first nations, and minimizing the effects of climate change, while also not having to spend much of their already tight budget to do so. This means that they may not be in favor of spending on initiatives such as building new windmills, or solar panels. However they will still agree with putting a stop to inefficient and environmentally toxic means of producing energy, such as coal which is still very popular in places such as the U.S., who produce almost half of their electricity with coal. Another option which Italy will be fully supportive of will be reducing climate changes effects on first nation’s peoples through other alternatives. These alternatives include ceasing the extraction of natural resources such as lumber, oil, and minerals from first nation’s lands and surrounding areas. This is something which has already been agreed to by countries such as Canada, although it is often conveniently ignored when it comes to projects like the oil pipeline. Once again this tells of a need to a more legally binding agreement. Perhaps one that includes boycotts or trade sanctions. Italy would also be in support of indigenous peoples’ land rights, as once again they themselves have nothing to lose from their support.

**Topic #3: Indigenous Peoples, Poverty, and Development**

Though Italy itself is unaffected by it, their support for the UNDRIP tells that they are in support of the betterment of indigenous rights. Arguably the biggest part of this is amending the damages which have been created through the oppression of indigenous people. To support indigenous rights is to support human rights in general. With this being said Italy will be fully on board with creating a plan that will have much more traction than the current plan which is rather ‘toothless’, and has no real legal power. The new agreement must strive to eliminate the harmful rules applied to the first nation’s people, which still exist. And to hold the agreed terms that were set so long ago between individual countries and their indigenous peoples. In this process it will be important to consult these people directly and involve them in the decision making process. More important however is the actual implementation. Over the years there have been examples of indigenous rights not being kept to by the government, with convenient loopholes. One such loophole was that in Canada, indigenous veterans were promised equal rights to all other veterans. However, all announcements and information about these rights were given exclusively at legion halls. Since indigenous people were prohibited from entering any pool-halls or bars, these veterans never received these rewards. This type of thing must be stopped by discontinuing such prohibitions. Indigenous people should have the exact same rights as any other citizens without prejudice and should receive what they have been promised. With this being said, Italy will be supportive of the correction of damages done to indigenous people, and will also work alongside other delegates to create a system where equality exists, and where both cultures are embraced. Much like what has been achieved within Italy with the Sardinians, and similar indigenous groups.

**Works Cited**

Minority Rights Group International, World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – Italy : Sardinians, 2008, available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/49749d0028.html [accessed 28 October 2016]

Minority Rights Group International, World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Italy : Aostans, 2008, available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/49749d032d.html [accessed 28 October 2016]

Rosa, Daniele La, Francesco Martinico, and Riccardo Privitera. "Il Ruolo Delle Aree Non Urbanizzate Nei Contesti Metropolitani: Scenari Di Adattamento Ai Cambiamenti Climatici." Territorio 66 (2013): 1-197. Web. 27 Oct. 2016.