**Council: UNGA Indigenous Affairs**

**Representing: COLOMBIA**

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**Topic: (1) INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, HEALTHCARE, MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

In all of the countries around the world, each one has it’s own unique issues with indigenous affairs. These issues can range from needs for improved health care, to indigenous tribes that are unaware of the outside world. Today, there are still many different tribes that are complete strangers to the outside world and must be studied from above. There are also the issues of healthcare that some countries cannot afford while some don’t pay attention to their people's needs. These are the issues that UNGA looks at.

Colombia has 87 different known tribes existing in its borders, many are unaware of the country that they are in. The oldest records of these tribes date back to around 43,000 BC. During the 1950’s the church was given jurisdiction over the lowland tribes and attempted to bring them into the modern lifestyle. The Colombian government has given these tribes which represent 2-3% of the population, very little respect. The tribes have almost no political representatives. The people of Colombia also do not show much interest in these tribes. The United Nations proclaimed the disclosure of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. The caused a wave of various indigenous movements. Right now though, nothing is being done about Colombia’s indigenous affairs.

Right now there is a war that has been going between the government and different rebel groups that has raged on for decades. At last the government and the leader of the rebels have decided to end the war but the Colombian people think differently. The vote for peace was 49% for and 51% against. This is likely due to the number of rebels born in the jungles and the people living in the city being afraid of how these jungle born rebels would merge in with society. Colombia’s focus is and should entirely on the re-integration of the past rebels into society and creating an agreement between them and the other citizens of Colombia.

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

Climate change has proven itself to have a large effect on our day-day lives. It also greatly affects the indigenous peoples living off of the land. Because indigenous people live off the land, climate change has a major effect on them since it can affect their crops and can flood villages if they live beside a river or some body of water. Recent studies show that climate change is mainly in the form of global warming which is causing more glaciers in the Arctic and in mountainous regions to melt creating higher sea levels. The UN is attempting to slow down the rate of global warming and other environmental disasters with the Kyoto Protocol.

Colombia has been identified as the world’s third most vulnerable country to climate change. In the last few years there has been a dramatic increase of floods throughout the country as well as droughts. The people of Colombia all know how much this affects their lives because as well as getting flooded or having droughts, Colombia relies greatly on its agriculture which means that their economy and food supplies could decrease as well because of climate change. Because of all this, Columbia is dedicated to helping in the fight against climate change. Colombia joined the UNFCCC in 1994 in response to the increase in floods and drought and have helped to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

Colombia will put in as much effort as it possibly can to the fight against climate change. To solve our issue, we need to decrease our use of fossil fuels and slowly change to more reliable and eco-friendly sources such as solar power and wind power. It’s obvious that the change from coal to solar and wind energy can’t be changed overnight, but a slow and stable change is better than nothing. Colombia wishes to work collaboratively with other nations to create solutions for global warming and the increase of rainfall during rain season.

**Topic: (3) INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, POVERTY, AND DEVELOPMENT**

Throughout the world their are thousands of indigenous groups with their own traditions and lifestyles. Some of these groups are actually unaware that the outside world even exists. Yet, even though there are so many indigenous groups, they are all given very little respect in the countries that they belong to and have less rights than the average citizen. They tend to be poorer than other citizens because the discrimination against them hurts their chances of finding good jobs. Even with all these issues, the UN doesn’t do as much about it as they would like too and the issue is normally dealt with by the national governments.

In Colombia there are about 87 different groups of indigenous people that reside in the jungles and forests. In the last few decades, the government has attempted to integrate them into modern society instead of letting them live off the land. The Colombian government has seen the indigenous peoples as communities for the last few decades and has only recently begun to look at them as needing to be treated and integrate differently. The indigenous peoples also have very little political power because of their distance from the cities which takes away their likelyhood to vote.