*Delegation from Represented by*

Switzerland John Abbott College

Switzerland and the UNGA Special Session on Indigenous Affairs Committee

The Swiss delegation is very pleased to be participating in this year’s UNGA Indigenous Affairs Committee. The Swiss Confederation, having no sizeable indigenous population of its own, has still contributed towards the betterment of these peoples through the signing of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 and hopes to contribute to the cause in the following conference as well.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Switzerland, having suffered immensely as a result of plagues in the past (such as the Spanish flu affecting nearly half the citizens of in Geneva in the early 20th century),[[2]](#footnote-2) sympathises with those indigenous populations who lack equitable access to medical services. Switzerland has also signed onto a good deal of treaties advocating for better well-being initiatives and the staunch respect of human rights, such as the “United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances”[[3]](#footnote-3) and the multiple Geneva Conventions and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007.[[4]](#footnote-4) In developing basic medical industries on a local level for affected populations, whilst slowly integrating them into the concerned nation’s healthcare system, the expansion of medical services can easily be established.

Furthermore, the issue of poverty and development is also very dire worldwide for aboriginal groups. Due to this fact and because the Swiss government strives to insure global monetary freedoms, the issue of indigenous wellness is also correlated to Swiss interests. Financial growth not only directly benefits the wages of poorer populations, but Keynesian economic theory, practiced commonly in Western Europe, indicates that wealth redistribution would improve national and international economics whilst ensuring the diminishment of economic inequalities.[[5]](#footnote-5) In that sense, providing extra financial subsidies and forms of affirmative action would also help close the gap between native indigenous peoples and the general populace wherever disparities are present. The issue of land rights and environmental issues has also posed a great problem for indigenous populations due to the fact that these individuals often live in remote natural habitats akin to their ancestral origins that are susceptible to degradation. Previous actions addressing the issue such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, despite its scope and inclusiveness regarding the rights of the marginalized indigenous people, still lacked the formal support of certain nations with large quantities of first peoples; among these were the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.[[6]](#footnote-6) Despite Switzerland’s famed history and emphasis on neutrality and sovereignty, it feels that the best course of action would be to directly address these nations in the hope of establishing a more inclusive resolution reiterating the international support of aboriginal groups in regards to the territorial rights of their native populace. Switzerland recognizes the fact that nations with significant native populations have had difficulty accommodating their aboriginal groups due to the latter’s sheer numbers, but proposes to incentivise these nations through reasoned debate and financial incentive.

In conclusion, despite lacking an aboriginal population, Switzerland is optimistic for the following conference and hopes to offer its expertise in future discussions in any way possible.

Delegate played by: Mahin Khan

1. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. “Indigenous People’s Access to Health Services.” *The State of the World’s Indigenous People*, 2016, 2-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ammon CE, “Spanish flu epidemic in 1918 in Geneva, Switzerland.”, PubMed, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12631986 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. United Nations. *United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances,* 1988 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. “Indigenous People’s Access to Health Services.” *The State of the World’s Indigenous People*, 2016, 2-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Keynes, John Maynard. *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money.* (Macmillan Cambridge University Press: BN Publishing, 2008), 127-134 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. United Nations. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)