United Nations General Assembly: Special Session on Indigenous Affairs

Oman

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

Too many Indigenous Peoples from around the world face issues surrounding the lack of healthcare and health services provided to them by their government. The lack of healthcare services has a great impact on women, young people, and the elderly. Expecting mothers living in Indigenous remote areas throughout the world are not receiving the proper medical attention and support they require in order to ensure mother’s health and their baby’s health. This results in birth complications, as well as an over all much higher rate of infant mortality in remote Indigenous communities compared to non-Indigenous communities. Mental health is another issue that has a very high impact on Indigenous Peoples Many Indigenous communities have high suicide rates. This is a result of colonialism, residential schools, and other social issues caused by discrimination whose impacts are still being felt today causing the high rates mental health issues. Indigenous communities are also being highly affected by diseases because of the lack of resources and medical services remote Indigenous communities receive. Malaria and Tuberculosis are the main diseases impacting Indigenous communities.

The delegation of Oman strongly believes actions need to be taken to guarantee greater access to healthcare services. In 2007, Oman voted in favour of the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Oman voted in favour of the UNDRIP because Oman believes that the world needs to tale measures to ensure the rights of Indigenous People and to also ensure that they receive they services they deserve from their government, such as healthcare. Oman believes Indigenous Peoples should not be discriminated against, and voted in favour of UNDRIP is validation of this. Through this conference, Oman hopes to achieve more of the rights Indigenous Peoples deserve across the world.

When it comes to disease that disproportionately affect Indigenous communities, Oman believes actions need to be taken by creating partnerships with community healers and medical professionals. Medical professionals can train community healers and give them the resources they need to be able to deal with diseases such as Malaria and Tuberculosis. This partnership ensures that community healers are aware of the proper methods of dealing with these diseases and have the resources needed. It also deals with the issue of Indigenous Peoples lack of trust (which is very understandable) because it is community healers primarily dealing with the health issues of the community. Medical professionals are only there to train and provide resources. For this solution, medical professionals who know Indigenous languages very proficiently or very proficient interpreters are needed. This solution also requires funding. For the issue of child mortality, Oman believes governments need to provide better and more accessible health services for expecting mothers. This requires a lot of funding to provide for the many costs associated with the accessibility of health services to remote Indigenous communities. This funding can be provided by NGO’s. Some solutions for mental health issues include providing support and counselling to Indigenous youth. This is requires because of the primary cause of mental health issues in Indigenous communities. Colonialism, residential schools, and other social issues caused by discrimination are the root cause of the mental health issues that disproportionately impact Indigenous youth. This is causes by the cycle of family issues caused by the previously mentioned causes of mental health issues. As an example, Indigenous Peoples in Canada who attended residential schools grew up in environments that were abusive mentally and physically. When they left residential schools they often turned to drugs and alcohol to self-mediate their mental illnesses and eventually had their own children. They did not know how to raise their children because their parents did not raise them; so many people raised their children through the methods residential schools used. This causes a cycle of family abuse and abuse of drugs and alcohol. This needs to be dealt with through counselling and providing support to Indigenous youth. This solution also requires funding to create education programs and counselling programs.

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

Land rights, climate change, and environmental protection of resources are very important to Oman. The land, environment, and resources are very important to Indigenous cultures. The destruction of land, resources, and the continued downfall of the environment could result in the loss of many Indigenous cultures and heritages because of how closely linked Indigenous cultures are to the land and resource. If one is declines, so does the other. Indigenous land rights are very important when it comes to conserving the environment. When Indigenous people remain in control of the land and the resources of the land, the land is better protected and conserved. Without land rights and consequences for the breaking of land rights, corporations are able to extract resources from the land which ruin the land and displace Indigenous Peoples. Climate change’s impact is being felt more heavily by Indigenous People because of the connection their culture have the environment and the affect the climate has on their traditions and heritage. Oman believes that resources also need to be protected such as forests to conserve the environment and conserve Indigenous cultures.

Through voting in favour of UNDRIP, Oman is also helping to protect the land rights of Indigenous People by taking a stand in favour of protecting the traditional lands and resources of Indigenous Peoples. Through this conference, Oman hopes to achieve more representation for Indigenous Peoples in politics as well as solutions to the issues of land and resource protection that do not take too much away from economic growth.

A major factor of the lack of land rights obtainable by Indigenous Peoples and the fact that their lands are often taken from them or developed without their knowledge is the lack of representation Indigenous Peoples have in politics. More representation of Indigenous Peoples would allow their voices and opinions to be heard more clearly, gives them a larger say in what happens to their lands and allows Indigenous Peoples to have a platform for voicing their concerns. Oman believes that another reasonable solution to this issue is having consequences in place when land rights are broken. These consequences could include having to pay the Indigenous Peoples whose land was taken from them a substantial amount of compensation. Due to Indigenous culture being so strongly tied to their environments it is very important to ensure that their land and resources are protected, because if the environment goes, so does their culture. Indigenous Peoples rely on their land to provide food, clothing, and shelter for them. They also preform cultural rituals and celebrate cultural events on traditional land, which is why the land is so important to their culture. The protection of Indigenous Peoples therefore is incorporated into the protection of land rights because protecting the land means protecting the culture. A barrier that will have to be overcome is the fact that fully giving land right to Indigenous Peoples means the slowing of economic growth because countries will no longer be able to exploit the resources.

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

Oman believes that the issue of poverty, lack of education, and inadequate funding are among the most important issues concerning Indigenous Peoples. Poverty affects a large amount of Indigenous Peoples throughout the world and is an issue that needs to be dealt with because of the negative impact this issue has on other issues, such as education and healthcare. Poverty results in the lack of food, shelter, medical resources, and education. In many places around the world funding for Indigenous social services is significantly lower than the funding for non-Indigenous services. Education in Indigenous communities is also lacking because of the inadequate amount of funding given to Indigenous communities. This results in Indigenous Peoples being far less educated than the rest of the population.

Oman wants to accomplish a plan for ensuring Indigenous populations receive the proper amount of funding for social services that matches up with the rest of the non-Indigenous population through this conference.

Possible solutions Oman believes would be useful when dealing with this issue is implementing proper funding by making sure that it matches up with funding for the rest of the non-Indigenous population. Another solution involves the resolution of “Indigenous Women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication” that was adopted by the International Union for Conservation of Natures (IUCN). Oman believes that this plan is very good because women of the community are able to achieve more within the community than government officials.

Works Cited:

United Nations General Assembly: Special Session on Indigenous Affairs background guide

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