

Brief Statement from Indigenous Peoples' Major Group

Thank you UN Environment for inviting Indigenous Peoples Major Group to this Consultation of Major Groups and Stakeholders with the Bureaus of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives holding in Nairobi this 21 -22 March 2018

UNEA -3 was a significant opportunity for us indigenous peoples - listening to government delegates on their achievement and commitment to make contribution towards pollution-free planet. Clearly, it is a noble collective aspiration that needs concerted effort from all of us. The concern of UNEA for environmental defenders is much appreciated.

As Indigenous Peoples, our homes are found in 70 countries and our territories is about 18% of the worlds total land. Having these and as custodians of biodiversity and protectors of our territories that does not only benefit our communities but society in general, indigenous peoples can be strong allies in the needed tasks that lay ahead of us. There are however fundamental matters that need to be addressed including the lack of sufficient funds to bring more indigenous peoples in the UNEA process.

Indigenous peoples have always regarded our health and wellbeing as intrinsically linked to our natural environment. We have thereby nurtured our territories not only for our health and wellbeing but also for our culture, collective survival and that of the future generation. Our territories are spread throughout the world in different ecosystems -- from the Arctic, the Amazon, the coast and rivers, the mountains, and we have developed profound indigenous knowledge in managing and conserving our resources. However, our lands and resources are being given away to concessions for mining and the extractive industries, for large hydro-power dams, for dumpsites including toxic wastes, for monocrop plantations, commercial agriculture that are dependent on toxic pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, among others. We didn't ask for these, more so, have not been part in decision making which makes us victims of unjust development and systemic discrimination.

In this regard, we would like to recommend that the UN Environment consider making creation of a dedicated fund within UNEA system to make possible the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the processes of UNEA.

Again, one of the major concerns of Indigenous Peoples is the inability of the UN Environment to properly monitor and compel States to implement decisions and agreements made at joint consultations like UNEA. A case in point is the UNEP Report on Ogoni environment which was released in August 2011 but the Nigerian Government and Shell are yet to clean and implement.

We wish this assembly, a fruitful deliberation.

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