Indigenous Peoples Statement

UNISDR Global Platform 2017

Indigenous peoples around the world have used their knowledge to prepare for, cope with and recover from disasters for millennia. Their methods and practices originate largely within the community and are maintained and disseminated through non-formal means developed and refined over generations.

However, over time and at an increasing rate, outside development practices are adversely affecting the environment of indigenous people, leading to secondary disasters and at times, making this highly relevant knowledge irrelevant. The value of fora such as this UNISDR Global Platform in Disaster Risk Reduction is that they provide opportunities for Indigenous People to access valuable information about the impact of these influences so that they may enhance their knowledge, preparedness and response patterns and minimize the risk of disaster.

Following are the key messages stemming from the discussion.

* Indigenous knowledge, values and culture are, in themselves, important risk reduction tools and should be incorporated into national and international DRR strategies. Indigenous knowledge must be valued and widely disseminated. Traditional indigenous knowledge, values and culture are, in themselves, important risk reduction tools, can provide synergies with successful non-indigenous experience, and should be incorporated into local, national and international DRR strategies.  Indigenous knowledge must be valued and widely disseminated.
* Indigenous communities have a deep understanding of and respect for the environment and ecosystems. However, outside development practices are too often adversely affecting their environment, leading to secondary disasters and at times, making traditional knowledge irrelevant. Indigenous peoples should have access to more information about the impact of these manmade situations in order to adapt their preparedness and response patterns and minimize the risk of a disaster.
* Indigenous peoples must have a voice in order to reduce disaster risk and vulnerability. The practice of imposing centralized and at times inadequate solutions to local problems can lessen the community’s capacity to reduce risk and save lives. They must have opportunities and resources to develop their own strategies as well as participate in the development of national and international policies.
* Definitions, concepts and standards related to disaster risk reduction and response must reflect both indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives.

**SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNISDR FOR ACTION GOING FORWARD**

* Recognize and make better use of indigenous perspectives and knowledge by incorporating these in UNISDR planning and programs
* Support the creation of regional indigenous networking to give voice to indigenous advocates for Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Risk Management.
* Advocate, through its National Platforms, for “a seat at the table” and for the inclusion of indigenous perspectives in national disaster risk reduction planning -- Nothing about us without us!
* Provide opportunities for indigenous participation in regional and international forums