



United Nations Human Rights Council

UNHRC

Topic B: Protecting the rights of indigenous people living in urban areas

Director: Daniela Rodríguez

Moderator: Diego Lozano

Secretary: Analucia Paez

Description of the Committee

The Human Rights Council is a system made up of 47 States. It is an inter-governmental body in the United Nations who is responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the world. It was established in 2006; its main idea is to stop the violations of the human rights. The UNHRC has the ability to assign independent special rapporteurs as well as the working groups for various countries and thematic human rights problems. Election to the UNHRC requires a majority vote by the UN General Assembly. When electing members, particular importance is attached to how the candidates have contributed to the promotion and respect of human rights and whether they have taken on special commitments in the area of human rights (Manskligarattigheter.se, 2017). The UN's focus on the growth of urban indigenous populations is based on the new phenomenon of mass rural urban migration. The United Nation's Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People states that Indigenous children have the right to education in their own language. The UN member states have allowed to give priority to the candidates that contribute to the promotion and respect of human rights.



Some member countries include...

- Brazil
- Croatia
- Rwanda
- Republic of Korea
(South Korea)
- China
- Netherlands
- South Africa
- Portugal
- Bangladesh
- Paraguay
- Switzerland
- Qatar

Introduction to the Topic

Indigenous people make up 5% of the global population and 15% of the world's poorest people; they have their human rights violated with frequency. They form groups of people with less political power than others who live in the same country ("OHCHR, Combating Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples", n.d.). They have historical ties with their territories, and they developed in pre-colonial and pre-invasion eras. They occupy lands that are meaningful to them, whether it's because of religion or an historical occurrence. They have different languages and cultures than most people; their religions are either indigenous religions that have been practiced and prayed upon for generations, or religions brought after the invasions in their respective countries, like Christianity and Catholicism (Gale, 2007).

Urban areas are places that have a huge amount of population living in them. These places are mostly big cities, towns, suburbs, etc. Most of the jobs in urban areas are non-agricultural, meaning that the jobs are more related to factories such as the mass production of items, design, technology, etc., than they are to planting crops. do not have as much space to plant crops since there are pipelines and other things under cities. According to National Geographic, these places often have many roads, buildings, and malls. Also, they usually have lots of people, meaning that there is a big amount of population density, which is the amount of people living per unit area or unit volume. Some examples of urban areas are Tokyo, Shanghai, Rio de Janeiro, New York, etc.

Indigenous people have their rights constantly violated. Since they are facing many problems, the main idea for this topic is to help those indigenous people integrate and have their rights respected by others, until people accept them for who they are and their human rights are respected. Respecting their lands, their traditions, their style of living, and helping them receive better jobs, health, documentation, housing, etc.

Background Information on the Topic

While many indigenous people still live in rural areas worldwide, many of them are starting to migrate to more urbanized areas. This is mainly because of the growing trend of living on a urbanized area. There are many factors that contribute to indigenous people migrating. Some include poverty, natural disasters, land dispossession, lack of employment, better opportunities in the cities, etc. Indigenous people are vulnerable to social and economic factors that affect their human rights. They tend to lack in education and live in land that has poor sanitation. At the same time, because of their limited access to political power, means that they are unable to use the political system to improve their position. Since indigenous people's lands have been taken away through history, most of them do not have a place to live in rural areas and have to migrate to the more urbanized areas to search for a place to call home. In some countries, indigenous people live in overcrowded houses and most of them are not in good conditions. Since they have to move to the city, they lose the privilege to have their traditionally built houses (Housing Indigenous Peoples in Cities, 2008).



Indigenous people that migrate to urban areas can face many challenges like unemployment, limited access to public services, discrimination, and may have trouble sustaining their language, culture, and identity. This means that if those indigenous people are educated in the city, the future generations may not inherit their language and their culture. Indigenous people usually have a hard time finding jobs thanks to their lack of education. Indigenous people need more education related to modern-day society in order to live and get along with the dominant race in their countries. Indigenous people have the right to learn and be educated in their own language ("Indigenous languages won't survive if kids are learning only English", 2014). The main languages that they teach young people these days are the official

languages in their country and one of the popular languages. For example, in Mexico and other parts of the world, they teach English, while in English-speaking countries they teach Spanish, such as in the United States. Many of those classes are taken in English. Indigenous people's language is not a topic that they teach in normal schools in cities, and they usually talk a little about how the country developed including the indigenous groups, so the only place they have to learn from their language and from their culture is at home. That also means that they have very little time to speak in their native language. Those kids can also feel pressured because, thanks to their lack of education, learning and applying a new language in everyday use can be difficult and takes a lot of time.

Indigenous people suffer from discrimination at work in urban areas. This has a direct link to the education that those indigenous people receive because they may not have been to a normal school and get the standardized education that all the other people in their country get. There are jobs that allow indigenous people, but if someone that is indigenous tried to aim for some of the higher-paying jobs, it is unlikely that they'll get them, since they may have not passed through high-school and college, and most jobs have as a requirement to have finished high school. Even though there are jobs that indigenous people can get without having high school finished, those jobs usually pay less and there are disadvantages to that, such as that they do not have a fixed salary and that their salary is also low or very low. There is a committee, ISAG, which stands for Inter-Agency Support Group, that helps indigenous people and cooperates to raise funds for them.



Current Situation of the Topic

Currently, the United Nations has become more focused on indigenous peoples and their migration trajectories. In many parts of the world, most of the national indigenous population now live in urban centres; this is the case for Australia. Urbanisation has been a historical reality for a number of indigenous groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia., New Zealand, Canada, the United States, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Venezuela, Norway and Kenya (N.p., 2017. Web. 19 Sept. 2017.) The aspects they are most facing these days include, limited access to services, discrimination, which is in schools, work, public places, etc. Generational language loss and cultural identity deterioration, as well as poor health and low socioeconomic outcomes

There are many indigenous people around the world, in Canada this people are currently one of the fastest growing in the world.

Philippines:

Indigenous people most typically migrate to urban areas because of loss of livelihood and lack of services due to tribal conflicts. Thanks to their limited access of education, they mostly face unemployment and poverty.

Mexico:

Illiteracy rates among the urban Indigenous people are four times higher than non-indigenous people. Urban indigenous people drop out of school earlier than non-indigenous people because they need to seek employment. This leads to working in poorly paid, low skilled jobs, and low salary.

Canada:

Indigenous Peoples environments develop under assault from extractive industries such as mining, oil exploration, logging, and agro-industrial projects. They resist this invasion with tremendous courage and skill, but their protests are too often ignored by governments and corporations, that is why it is really important to protect their rights and treat them equally. The government's ignorance is another reason why this people migrate because they are vulnerable to range and social economic factors that affect their human rights, even though the majority of indigenous peoples worldwide still live in rural areas, they are increasingly migrating to urban areas, both voluntarily and involuntarily.

South Africa:

This country can be taken into account as a country of minorities, yet questions of minority rights take a distinctive form. Pervasive opposition to the enforced racial and tribal

classifications of apartheid has led to considerable scepticism over calls for any defence of rights on a group basis.

Australia:

Is one of the most urbanised countries in the world, with well over two-thirds of the population living in major cities. The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in urban areas, too, continues to increase (N.p., 2017. Web. 21 Sept. 2017.) The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in urban areas, too, continues to increase, and now they live in major cities and inner regional areas.

Recommendations for creating a Resolution

When creating a solution, please take into account that indigenous people are not used to the urban way of life since they have spent most of their lives in rural areas. Think of solutions that can help indigenous people satisfy their rights as humans, such as education, a place to live, security, good health, etc. Try to make solutions that will help indigenous people fit in in society. Please know that indigenous groups may have different religions from the dominant races in their respective countries, so they should also have the right to pray and follow their own god/gods. Write solutions that will help them get a better education while also following their lifestyle, meaning that they can learn things about modern-day society while also keeping their indigenous roots somewhat intact. Add solutions about how your delegation plans to help those indigenous people living in the streets. Try writing about how your delegation plans to provide documentation to those undocumented indigenous people to make them legal citizens of your delegation country and to fully help them integrate in modern-day society.

Questions to consider

- Does your delegation's country have any indigenous groups? If so, please research about them, such as their language, customs, culture, when they started developing, indigenous people that have succeeded in modern-day society (if there are any) etc.
- Does your delegation have any groups or organizations that help indigenous people integrate in society?
- Where are the indigenous people in your delegation's country located?
- Do indigenous people in your delegation's country have jobs in the cities? What are those jobs?
- Are there any laws in your delegation for indigenous people rights?
- Do the indigenous people in your delegation have a good education? Try to explain which type of education they have and if it is in their own communities or in urban areas.

You do not have to answer all these questions, but try to answer most of them in your position paper.

Research Aid

- http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/6_session_factsheet2.pdf
- <https://poche.centre.uq.edu.au/files/609/Indigenous-in-the-city%281%29.pdf>
- http://www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday/pdf/factsheet_migration_final.pdf
- http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Discrimination/Pages/discrimination_indigenous.aspx
- <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/urban-area/>

Terms and Concepts

- Indigenous people:
- Urban Area: A city area considered as the inner city plus built-up environs, irrespective of local body administrative boundaries.
- Migration: Movement from one part of something to another.
- Human Rights: A right that is believed to belong justifiably to every person.

Bibliography (APA Style)

OHCHR | Combating Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples. Ohchr.org. Retrieved 14 September 2017, from
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Discrimination/Pages/discrimination_indigenous.aspx

Gale, T. (2007). *Indigenous Religions - Dictionary definition of Indigenous Religions* | *Encyclopedia.com: FREE online dictionary. Encyclopedia.com. Retrieved 14 September 2017, from*
<http://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/indigenous-religions>

urban area. National Geographic Society. Retrieved 14 September 2017, from
<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/urban-area/>

Indigenous languages won't survive if kids are learning only English. (2014). *The Conversation*. Retrieved 21 September 2017, from
<http://theconversation.com/indigenous-languages-wont-survive-if-kids-are-learning-only-english-30311>

Anon. (2017). [online] Available at:
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/6_session_factsheet2.pdf [Accessed 21 Sep. 2017].
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/6_session_factsheet2.pdf