

MEENAKSHI MUNDA - Oral Statement after Affected Peoples Panel

Thank you Mr. Chair

I speak on behalf of Friends of the Earth International and represent Indigenous community of India.

Many of the remaining natural resources lying beneath Indigenous land and the surrounding areas are primary targets for various Transnational Companies' ventures. Indigenous Peoples are most affected by the interference of transnational Companies, often with State support. Ironically affected communities have little or a negligible say in these matters .

Indigenous Peoples communities worldwide are under great stress, not because of factors within the community, but because of external factors: Land grabbing, displacement, vulnerable life conditions, human right violations etc. Indigenous Peoples have historically been victims of colonialism and now of so called development and it would be a great injustice if they are overlooked once more, with such a historic opportunity here today to build justice by defining binding rules for transnational corporations.

This does not mean that we are anti-development but we feel strongly that development in any form should not be at the cost of the peoples and to benefit corporations. We as indigenous peoples face a lack of access to justice and grievance mechanisms despite the conflicts the Transnational Companies' operations bring to our lands.

We need the UN Treaty process to progress to the next session of text negotiations in 2018 in order to guarantee the following for Indigenous Peoples:

- respect our sense of belonging and the right to land, beyond property titles
- respect our decisions in relation to the projects we do or do not want to be implemented.
- ensure that no project promoted by transnational corporations, with funds or support from IFIs or other international actors can enter a territory where there are indigenous peoples, without first carrying out a community consultation in good faith and with other requirements and instruments;
- respect the results of consultations carried out by Indigenous Peoples regarding TNCs projects of any kind;
- ensure through prior and informed consultation carried out in good faith the right to freedom of expression and expression of thought, so that nobody is persecuted for expressing their opinions in any kind of consultation.

Yet today many states do not recognize Indigenous Peoples as such, negating the importance and very essence of United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Free prior and informed consent and Right to Self Determination.

We strongly call for a binding treaty that will regulate and control transnational companies as part of concrete steps towards all states recognizing that our life is more valuable than the unsustainable profit making ventures of Transnational Companies.

We wish the Treaty process to advance and flourish into negotiation sessions next year on the basis of the Chair's draft, taking into account Indigenous Peoples participation and respecting their forms of consultation.