



SPECPOL

AGENDA ITEM:

Preservation of Indigenous Cultures in Formerly Colonized Regions

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**NERİMAN EROL YILMAZ SOCIAL SCIENCES HIGHSCHOOL
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I. Letter from the Secretary General

Most Esteemed Participants of Neriman Erol Yılmaz Social Sciences High School Model United Nations Conference, on behalf of myself and of other members of the Executive Team,

My name is Yasemin Raithel, I am a senior graduating from Private Açı Science College. It is my great honor and pleasure to be serving as the Secretary-General of this fabulous conference. Model United Nations conferences are not just a place where diplomatic views are discussed; they are events that provide you with the ability to fully express yourself in critical situations, giving speeches in a confident way in multi-person committees, bringing solutions to problems from the perspective of countries, and many other skills like these. That's why these conferences are like an open door for you to improve yourself. Step out of your comfort zone and don't miss this opportunity. I have no doubt that your experience will be the best you have had in a long time.

Both our academic and organisation teams have dedicated limitless hours and put so much work to deliver to the whole Antalya Model United Nations Society one of the most incredible MUN experience you have seen to this day. Last but not least, let this be a new beginning, as befits the motto of the

conference: The Dawn of the Moon. Lastly, I would like to leave a quote with hopes of a marvellous conference;

“Men become builders by building and lyreplayers by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.”

-Aristotles

Sincerely,

Yasemin RAITHEL

Secretary-General of NEYMUN'25

II. Letter from the Under Secretary-General

Esteemed Delegates,

As the Under Secretary-General of this committee; SPECPOL, I, Tunahan ZENGİN, welcome you all to this exclusive conference NEYMUN'25 and to committee SPECPOL. As I already mentioned I will be your Under Secretary-General for these three days in the committee.

I would like to continue my letter by giving my thanks to the Executive Team for giving me a chance to take part in this the most prestigious conference. Also thanks to my Academic Assistant, Duru SARIKAYA, whose invaluable contributions and dedication have been crucial to the organization of this committee. Without her efforts, this committee would not have been possible. To my dear Delegates, I want you all to be well-prepared for the committee. Do your research about The Questions to be Addressed which are given at the end of the Study Guide and read the Study Guide carefully.

I firmly believe that this committee will be an experience that will help you develop academically and personally and that it will offer valuable opportunities for mutual growth and learning. Please do not hesitate to contact me about the committee or the conference.

Best Regards,

Under Secretary-General

Tunahan ZENGİN

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III. Letter from the Academic Assistant

Welcome you all to this exclusive conference. I am extremely proud to present this committee to all of you. I am Duru SARIKAYA. I am a student at Neriman Erol Yılmaz Social Science High School and I will be your academic assistant.

First things first, I would like to thank our executive team for their efforts and the opportunity I was granted. Additionally, I would like to express my thanks to my Under Secretary General who has an important role for this committee.

Understanding the importance and seriousness of our committee is essential to perform a successful committee. SPECPOL, the fourth of the six main committees of the United Nations General Assembly. In the main, as in our agenda item, a valuable committee that produces effective solutions for the end of colonialism.

I hope this study guide which we have written with our Under Secretary General is understandable and clear enough. In order to this experience to be as efficient as possible for you, I recommend you read the guide carefully and study diligently. In this way, we can perform our committee in the best possible way. I wish a pleasant conference for all of us. See you at the conference!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask
durusarikaya07@gmail.com

Sincerely,
Academic Assistant
Duru SARIKAYA

IV. Introduction to the Committee

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL) is fourth of the six main committees of the United Nations General Assembly. It was created in 1945 to address a wide range of global challenges, from decolonization to human rights, environmental issues, and political stability. Originally two separate committees, the fourth committee focused solely on decolonization affairs before 1993, when it was merged with the Special Political Committee during the end of the United Nations trust Territory

system. The committee is focused on a broad range of issues including the effects of atomic radiation and reviewing peacekeeping operations.

Every country in the UN 193 in total participates in SPECPOL. This makes it a place where countries, developed and developing, can come together to discuss problems and find common solutions. While SPECPOL could not pass laws or directly enforce actions, its recommendations often help set the direction for international norms and agreements.

SPECPOL primarily concerns itself with political destabilization within or between member nations and discusses the grievances that nations bring before the committee. It also deals with issues of the General Assembly that are related to the right to self-determination, decolonization, the use of UN peacekeeping forces, and other topics that are not dealt with by the Disarmament and International Security Committee (also known as the First Committee of the General Assembly). In general, SPECPOL, like other GA committees, discusses those issues for which the Security Council may carry out enforceable decisions and measures such as economic sanctions.

SPECPOL may not impose sanctions or authorize military action in its resolutions.

V. Introduction to the Agenda Item

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee, in general terms, focuses on maintaining peace and ending colonialism. Our agenda item 'Preservation of indigenous cultures in formerly colonized regions' emphasizes that it is essential to prevent the situation of formerly colonized regions from losing their culture.

Preserving Indigenous Cultures in Former Colonized Areas is scheduled for consideration. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee's (SPECPOL) mandate includes preserving international peace and dealing with the impacts of colonialism;

In this sense, the agenda item 'Preservation of Indigenous Cultures in Formerly Colonized Areas' calls to attention the need to preserve the cultural identities of communities affected by colonialism. Today, Indigenous peoples are still experiencing the gradual dispossession of their culture in numerous former colonies. The impacts of colonialism and colonial practices are still in effect, threatening the cultural sustainability of these communities. Cultural dislocation has resulted from the introduction, and sometimes imposition of, foreign language, religion, customs, and way of life to Indigenous peoples of the land by the colonizers or the settlers. If this displacement were to continue, the distinct identities of these communities may only exist as a footnote in the history of settlements, and run the risk of being replaced over time as external influences seek to positively establish themselves in terms of acceptance by Indigenous societies. This dispossession of culture does.

Therefore, it is our responsibility to recognize the seriousness of this issue and commit to protecting and promoting the cultural integrity of formerly colonized peoples. Only by doing so can we help ensure that these communities not only survive but flourish with their identities intact.

VI. Key Concepts and Definitions

Indigenous Peoples and Their Rights

Indigenous peoples are the original inhabitants of a geographical area who share distinctive cultural identities, languages, and practices ancestral to them through generations of local peoples who first inhabited the space. These communities often maintain deep spiritual and physical ties to their territories, surrounded by land that produces not just food, but features social and cultural aspects simultaneously.

In many cases, despite being there for millennia, indigenous peoples have continually experienced a history rife with injustices, such as dispossession of land through forced removal, assimilation processes undermining their traditions, languages, and practices, and in spaces where colonization was enabled, genocide. These ramifications are alive and well today, and indigenous peoples still face difficulties accessing quality education, healthcare, social and political representation and participation, and economic opportunity.

Indigenous peoples' rights address numerous issues, including the right to protect and develop the heritage of their peoples, right to be governed with their own governance system, and the right to live their lives according to their own traditions and ways of knowing. These issues are not just a preference for their way of life, they are part of the sustenance of rich and diverse forms of culture that also support the continuation of our human knowledge as a world.

Cultural Heritage and Its Preservation

Cultural heritage includes languages, spiritual beliefs, visuals, musical songs, customs, traditional knowledge and sacred sites that have crafted the identity of a people. For indigenous peoples, their cultural heritage signifies much more than a symbol, it is a present-day reality and living tradition expressing their past and continuing relationship to the land, ancestors and way of life.

Colonization in many regions involved the erasure, or destruction, of pre-colonization cultural heritage. For example, in Australia, the institutionalized kidnapping of Aboriginal children—the Stolen Generations—was an effort to disconnect Indigenous people from their culture during a time when there was active and widespread efforts for assimilation into Western society. In Canada, Indigenous schools aimed at erasing Indigenous culture were widespread for more than a century, which included the violent removal of children from their families, where they were forbidden to speak their language and often faced abuse. Similar suppression of Indigenous culture took place in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as governments devalued or outlawed local systems of belief, language, and governing.

A socially sustainable heritage preservation response today must also deal with the problem of historic harms. Heritage preservation does not just mean identifying and protecting physical artifacts, or sacred spaces, but recognizes the need to revive and reinstate many endangered languages, oral histories, and Indigenous epistemologies. An example of this is the revitalization of the Māori language in New Zealand with various community-led initiatives, including language nests, or *kōhanga reo*.

True preservation can only be attempted by Indigenous communities itself, given they can be respected through education, law and public support. Preserving culture is not simply preserving the past nor freezing culture, it is about allowing culture to flourish, change and have meaning for another generation.

Decolonization and Cultural Revitalization

Decolonization is the process in which a country that was previously a colony becomes politically independent in other words the process of getting rid of colonies.

Decolonization, which can be called the movement to establish the independence of the colonized territories from their metropolises, began in North America in 1775. Large waves of decolonization occurred after the First World War and most prominently after the Second World War. The Second World War caused great destruction and chaos in the coloniser states as well as in the colonised states. This state of turmoil, independence has created the appropriate environment for the organization and emergence of its movements. In the war, the colonial countries have violently destroyed each

other's military forces. This situation has also given hope to the independence movements. Especially Japan's destructive activities in Southeast Asia led some of the colonies in this region to gain their independence immediately after the war. **The idealism of decolonisation is the desire for freedom with a growing sense of nationalism and the search for justice.**

Cultural revitalisation is an effort to preserve and revive cultural practices, traditions, languages and customs that are at risk of being lost or forgotten.

This can be done through various means, such as community events, educational programs, language revitalization efforts, and the preservation of historical sites and artifacts. Cultural revitalization is important for maintaining a sense of identity and connection to one's heritage, as well as promoting understanding and appreciation of different cultures. It can also help to foster a sense of pride and belonging within communities.

Examples such as the revitalisation of Maori language and traditions in New Zealand, the promotion of **First Nations** cultures through education and reconciliation policies in Canada, and the preservation of the language of the Sami people in Norway make cultural revitalisation possible.

VII. Challenges to Indigenous Cultures

Cultural Erosion and Language Loss

Cultural erosion is without a doubt one of the most pressing concerns for indigenous peoples today: the diminishing body of traditional knowledge, traditional practices, and identities, a trend that we are then forced to follow, if we are to begin establishing our own identities. Cultural erosion is the loss of language, and one of the many impacts of language loss is that it generally has far deeper impacts on cultural transmission, continuity.

Each language we use is a repository of a unique world view, and systems of knowledge that connected us to the land and our ancestors. When an indigenous language goes extinct, it is a key part of our history and who we are. It has been estimated globally that the vast majority of the roughly 7,000 languages in the world are indigenous languages, and a lot of them are also facing extinction. The general trend in the world is that linguists say one indigenous language goes extinct about every two weeks.

A lot of this loss comes from indigenous peoples' colonization era policies. In various parts of the world, indigenous children were taken from their communities, and placed in boarding or residential schools that were directed in part through punitive policies that forced children to speak the aggressors language. For example, in Canada's residential school programs, children were forbidden from speaking Cree, Inuktitut, or other various indigenous languages. This type of language suppression was pervasive in Canada and the United States, and further, could be tracked from individual cases to larger Native American activist movements and governmental assimilation programs that had other Native American languages such as Cherokee and Lakota and others, and acts or systems where they supported Native American languages while simultaneously stigmatizing or making the spoken blamed/assumed ultimately language in dominant society largely ignored. Cultural corrosion is further compounded by contemporary influences like urbanization, the

influence of mass media and education systems that prioritize dominant cultures and languages. Children may grow up without learning any practices or use of the language of their ancestors due to either lack of access, or adherence to social pressure to conform to mainstream society.

But all over the world, communities are pushing back against this loss. Through language revitalization programs, cultural education centres and intergenerational knowledge exchange, communities are able to reclaim and protect cultural practices under threat.

Economic and Political Marginalization

Economic and political marginalization remains a persistent issue for many indigenous communities worldwide. These forms of exclusion continue to root colonial histories, in which indigenous peoples were often forced to cede land, resources, and political authority. While formal colonial rule may have ended, the legacies of history yet persist, and indigenous peoples experience exclusion and lack of influence through systemic inequalities and lack of representation.

On the economic front, indigenous communities are often confronted with high levels of poverty; limited quality educational and health care opportunities; poor access to employment positions; and traditional livelihoods disrupted by large development projects or environmental degradation, which limit access to ancestral land. The combination of these economic determinants leaves many indigenous communities with limited options to sustain themselves or invest in the vitality of their culture.

Politically, the voices of indigenous peoples are generally absent from formal government and policy development processes. Indigenous governance

systems are often not recognized or part of their versions of official governing frameworks and, more often than not, the term "Indigenous peoples" or justice considerations for Indigenous peoples are overlooked from national plans. This lack of political influence is a significant barrier for indigenous communities to protect their land, rights, and cultures. The concurrent experience of hardship and political exclusion is the context of many of the challenges to indigenous peoples to negotiate their marginalization to identity as indigenous peoples. The extremes of poverty contribute another cycle of marginalization, which limits the existence of cultures, traditions, languages, and social systems to survive. In these contexts, one can imagine how challenging, if not impossible, it becomes to access the local economic, social, and political resources to extend their marginalization to live out their identities as indigenous peoples. While recognition is imperative to consider formal governance structures, without access to resources and decision-making, the hope of retaining traditions, languages, and social systems are fading.

Taking on this challenge requires a conscientious approach to equity, and fair representation, and supporting indigenous-led development. The ability for indigenous peoples to establish economic and political influence is critical for indigenous communities to preserve the core of their culture and sustain future generations.

Environmental Threats to Indigenous Lands

Indigenous peoples often have a deep and long-standing connection to the environment based on sustainable use, and spiritual connections to place. Their territories are about more than residence, they are spaces of culture, history, and ecology. However, lands are increasingly threatened by environmental destruction and calls for extraction from outside entities.

One key challenge was the loss of ecologically significant land from actions such as deforestation, mining, industrial and large-scale agricultural practices, and infrastructure development such as dams, roads, and urbanization. Each of these land-based activities leads to increasingly severe pollution, destruction of habitat, and depletion of access to nature for whole communities. Too often, these activities take place without any consultation with, or any meaningful consent by, the traditional indigenous holders of the land.

Climate change has also become an increasingly prominent threat. Increasing temperatures, altered rainfall patterns, rising sea levels, and natural disasters - environmental phenomena associated with climate change - are having some of the greatest impacts on susceptible populations like Indigenous communities. Indigenous people living in these vulnerable coastal and sub-arctic regions often depend on this water and land for their seasonal natural resource needs, and their ways of life that are tied to their land, ecological knowledge and seasonal cycles. When the environment changes, their ways of life change.

Moreover, legal and political systems frequently do not recognize rights to indigenous land, thus exposing communities to encroachment and exploitation. The lack of protection for indigenous land rights, and the lack of protection for indigenous groups also, hampers indigenous people's ability to respond to encroach on, defend or seek redress of any violation of their territories.

The need to protect indigenous lands is fundamental not only to the ongoing existence of indigenous cultures but also to global environmental sustainability. Indigenous lands typically harbour whole ecosystems with rich biodiversity and are often examples of sustainable harvesting practices. Providing environmental justice to indigenous peoples is a critical measure in the protection of indigenous culture and to preserve the health of our planet.

The Impact of Globalization

Globalization is the increasing connection between economies, cultures, and technologies that, while offering often opposing effects upon indigenous cultures, can serve as opportunities for connection, awareness, and advocacy which may also impact cultural preservation and self-determination.

One common issue with globalization is that it often replaces any meaningful cultural interaction with homogenization of culture. Global media, consumer patterns, and a dominance by lingo can often times bones have a stronger relationship with the indigenous realms and worldviews than their traditions and values. As youth have access to global lifestyles and lived experiences, they become increasingly pressured to give up their mental models of cultural and kin identity formation during their maturation process in the realm of globalization as they develop to conform to the standards of the masses.

Globalization, ensuring that it remains global often puts profits ahead of cultural and environmental protections. Economic development, often driven by multinational corporations and/or global markets, usually manipulates indigenous land and/or resources without acknowledgement of traditional knowledge or community rights. This complicity of inequitable development can maintain multiple layers of meta-story, often pushing the unsettled indigenous places deeper into the margins without consideration in their local -and global- negotiations.

Yet, globalization presents alternative spaces for indigenous movements and cultural practice. Digital and social media, global convenings, and political intersections are democratizing stories into inequitable relationships, revitalizing or remembering cultural practices, and supporting shared paths of

discord while accessing benefits of transnational advocacy. All of this is driven by the push back of the power of the dichotomy of indigenous perspectives and communities grappling with similar, or the same, landscapes of inequity.

In the end, the impact of globalization on indigenous cultures also depends on what is done with it. When indigenous peoples have the power to take the lead, globalization can become an avenue for cultural resilience instead of cultural loss. Without protections and policies to include indigenous peoples in their own sovereignty, globalization can speed up the very dissolution many communities are working to combat.

VIII. Global and Regional Preservation Efforts

International Frameworks: The UNDRIP and UNESCO

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) provides a framework for reconciliation, healing and peace, as well as harmonious and cooperative relations based on the principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, non-discrimination and good faith.

This declaration, accepted by the United Nations in 2007 is the most comprehensive instrument in international law and policy that describes in detail the rights of indigenous peoples and includes minimum standards for the recognition, protection and development of these rights. It establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity, well-being and rights of the indigenous peoples of the world.

Of all the organizations connected to the UN, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the one mandated to deal with preservation of the cultural heritage.

The constitution of UNESCO contributes peace, security and justice through cooperation between nations through education, science and culture to further universal respect for the rule of law and human rights.

UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage framework offers a comprehensive approach to preserving and promoting traditional crafts. It highlights the value of community involvement and empowerment in protecting and fostering intangible cultural assets, as well as the social and cultural significance of traditional crafts.

National Efforts in Formerly Colonized Regions

Countries that have survived colonialism have made a number of national efforts to regain their lost independence and identity. In order to develop and be able to resist external forces, they had recreated themselves from scratch.

After colonization, when people from many nationalities began to live in the same region, loss of identity and turmoil in the society became inevitable. Therefore, formerly colonized regions aimed to unite different ethnic groups under a single national identity. Since the way to achieve this was through legal means, a constitution should have been prepared.

In order to establish an independent system of government, these regions limited the authority of the colonists as much as possible. These colonized regions also replaced the colonial institutions with their own indigenous institutions. India's implementation of a democratic constitution in 1950 can be an example of this legal effort.

Replacing colonial institutions with indigenous institutions was also necessary in order to be able to declare economic independence. Thus, formerly colonized regions started to expropriate the institutions which are controlled by foreign nations. Over time, by carrying out agricultural reforms, they made efforts to be self-sufficient without being in need of other nations. Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1950 can be an example.

Formerly colonized regions have also turned to some social solutions in order to realize cultural revival. Senegal, Mexico, India and many other colonized countries are trying to promote their native languages, religions and traditions in order to regain their identity. Instead of adopting Western cultures, they are still standing against Eurocentric culture by trying to protect their own cultures.

These nations, which have existed as colonies for many years, are standing up to the colonial threat in order not to lose their independence that they have regained again. Thus, they don't let the economic and political forces of formerly colonial regions. At the same time, formerly colonized nations followed a policy of neutrality in global affairs. As a result, the **Non-Aligned Movement** was established under the leadership of Sukarno who was the leader of Indonesian struggle for independence from the Dutch colonialists, attracting numerous member states during the Cold War that sought to maintain independence from both the Western and Eastern blocs.

Case Studies: Successes and Failures

Peacekeeping operations have evolved and changed dramatically since the Cold War began. The majority of UNPKOs around the world have been performed under UN mandates, so the term is mainly associated with UNPKOs. Since 1988, there has been an increase in the number and the size of UNPKOs. Several studies have found that peacekeeping does help stabilize conflict-torn countries, decreasing the likelihood of recurrent conflicts. The successes and failures of UN peacekeeping missions are usually measured by the duration of peace after civil wars; these successes and failures are also a benchmark used to evaluate the results of an action in an operation's progress. **United Nation Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) are deployed to create, maintain and secure peace in countries and regions struggling with violence and war.**

The success and failure criteria summarize the achievement of a mission, and the overall objectives of the operation set two criteria for evaluating the achievements of peacekeeping operations: limiting armed conflict and promoting conflict resolution. To measure the achievements, these criteria were tested in the six most notable peacekeeping operations between 1956 and 1984, which were carried out in these cases:

- The United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I) from 1956-1967 on the Egyptian Israeli border
- In the same area from 1973-1979,
- The United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) between 1960-1964,
- The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) from 1964 onward,

- The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UN- IFIL) from 1978 onward,
- A Multinational Force (MNF) commanded by the United States, in Lebanon from 1982 – 1984.

By analyzing the conflict situation and peacekeeping initiatives, it was claimed that these peacekeeping operations were successful under these five conditions:

1. Consent of the parties by the host state and the third party,
2. Peacekeepers apply limited use of force except in self-defence,
3. Peacekeeping operations preserve their neutrality by not favouring or being seen as favouring either side in the conflict,
4. Peacekeeping addresses interstate rather than intrastate conflicts,
5. Peacekeepers are able to separate and demobilize the combatants.

The success of the operations is primarily determined by the success criteria used. Factors influencing the successes and failures of the operation/mission range from nonuse of force except in self-defence, one of the UN factors to cultural considerations.

IX. The Role of Education and Media

Education and media have an important role to play in the regeneration of Indigenous peoples' cultures, particularly in places that were colonized where there is ongoing impact of assimilation and erasure of Indigenous identities, languages, and practices.

Education

Historically, education as a colonized system works to extinguish Indigenous conveyed or Indigenous practices that are not aligned to Western or colonial norms. Indigenous children and youth were who often faced forced boarding systems, where they were taught to reject their cultures and languages. These systems forced cultural erosion for generations, and continue to create barriers to identity and self-determined action.

Today, education represents an opportunity for cultural revitalization.

Culturally relevant education that actively engages Indigenous communities can create the opportunities to re-establish and normalize the use of languages and memorialize traditional practices and ways of knowing. Opportunities include but are not limited to:

Mother-tongue and bilingual education;

Program of study that focus on Indigenous histories, worldviews, and practices;

Community-based schools with/without elders and/or traditional knowledge holders involved;

Indigenous-controlled educational systems.

When Indigenous youth undertake educational learning within systems that affirm and reflect their inherited strengths, it permeates and solidifies cultural

continuity for community, families and helps preserve the endangered cultural practices.

Media

Media – including traditional media and digital media helps shape how cultures are seen and how they understand themselves as well as how others understand them. The dominant mainstream media has represented Indigenous peoples either completely invisibly or by perpetuating stereotypes for decades. More recently, Indigenous peoples have used Indigenous-led media; with film, journalism, and social media for their own purposes to highlight, change, and reclaim representations, perspectives, and narratives.

Media supports cultural preservation by:

- Documenting and sharing oral histories, languages, ceremonies, and art;
- Disrupting colonial narratives and stereotypes;
- Providing space for Indigenous creators to share their own culture; and
- Connecting Indigenous communities across distance and generations.

Digital media has provided new opportunities for cultural exchange and cultural revival. Young people are using online tools to learn traditional practices, teach languages, and organize around cultural and political issues.

Moving Forward

In order for education and media to contribute to Indigenous cultural preservation, these sectors must be influenced by Indigenous peoples rather than imposed upon Indigenous peoples. Member states and relevant stakeholders must develop policies that allow Indigenous peoples to control educational content, and media production, so that these sectors can function as sites of empowerment and cultural vitality rather than assimilation.

X. Human Rights and Cultural Sovereignty

Right to Self-Determination

The right to self-determination is enshrined in international law as a principle of political, economic, social and cultural self-development for people, and for general reference we have the United Nations Charter, 1945 (Article 1), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). It is important to note that all peoples have the right to freely determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

For Indigenous people it is more than self-determination or self-government, it is the collective right to "...not only preserve but also promote and develop distinct hollowed aspects to culture, identity and purpose within a nation." This means Indigenous people have the right to collectively engage in and maintain and strengthen their distinct identities, languages, traditions and beliefs without interference, and there needs to be a significant movement away from tokenism that would progress meaningful engagement through action for collective dialogue.

Also in many formerly colonized contexts, self-determination can be understood as reflecting upon the journey of colonization, possibly more so because of the forced imposition of foreign ways of political, governance, education and religion that diminished and relegated Indigenous cultural values and practices and suppressed culture and language. Today, self-determination is about community and collective cultural recovery from the historical injustices forced upon Indigenous people, but the contention of self-determination and recovery will remain contested areas in the discussion due to conceptual parallels between national sovereignty, territorial integrity and economic and resource outcomes.

Intellectual Property Rights in Indigenous Culture

Intellectual property rights (IPR) related to indigenous culture are the legal and ethical recognition of indigenous people's ownership of their traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, and heritage. Traditional knowledge encompasses oral histories, rituals, music, dance, art, spiritual symbols, traditional ecological knowledge, medicinal systems, and many more, which are often collectively developed and maintained by communities over generations. Conventional intellectual property rights are developed in the context of Western legal traditions with a central focus on individual ownership of innovation for a limited period of time. Accordingly, intellectual property rights are largely inconsistent with indigenous concepts of culture that are commonly conceived as collective, spiritual, and intended to be shared, sometimes indefinitely. Indigenous people's cultural heritage is misappropriated and subsequently commodified without consent, benefit, or recognition in the contemporary world on an astonishing scale. A few examples include the unauthorized printing of traditional designs on fashion apparel, patenting native knowledge of medicinal plants by pharmaceutical companies or reproductions of sacred symbols by commercial media. The appropriation of indigenous people's culture engenders the loss of economic opportunities, but it also violates their cultural sovereignty and chips away at their spiritual integrity. Collective efforts at the international level, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the current dialogues taking place in the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) have attempted to fill the gaps created by laws

and policies that are exclusively focused on IPR, by advancing alternative structures that respect indigenous peoples and Indigenous IPR.

The Role of NGOs and Civil Society Organizations

NGOs and CSOs support indigenous culture, especially where governments have been negligent or colonialism has left lost cultural legacies to generations of activists. NGOs and CSOs can act as intermediaries between indigenous communities, state governments, and international organizations, work to promote indigenous rights, and provide venues for indigenous voices while also supporting community based activism in cultural revitalization. NGOs might document endangered languages, facilitate traditional education, support land rights claims, and stand against development initiatives that threaten indigenous heritage. Non-Government Organizations will work with indigenous communities to provide the following: legal support, public campaigns for political changes, and raise awareness of the injustices that indigenous peoples face culturally and environmentally in the world. Effective non-governmental organizations are vanguard in working hand in hand with indigenous communities. Community driven means that both community context, internal needs, and local knowledge systems are respected and the community is placed as the leader. Non-Government organizations face their own challenges; insufficient or too few means, resistance from governments, and doing the heavy lifting of outside actors to either fulfill a government's obligation or have their own agenda without recognizing indigenous possibilities. Regardless, the benefit of non- governmental organizations and hence CSO agents are invaluable in terms of relatively closing the distances between marginalized groups and historical institutions of power and possible reeling in of cultural survival, and connecting to a larger movement of indigenous self-determination on state and international fronts.

XI. Questions To Be Addressed (QTBA)

- What role should the international community play in supporting the cultural preservation of indigenous peoples?
- Should the preservation of indigenous culture be a legal obligation under international law or remain a domestic policy issue?
- How can states effectively prevent the loss of indigenous culture caused by economic development and urbanization?
- How can the right to self-determination for indigenous peoples be upheld without threatening the territorial integrity of existing states?
- How should media regulation play in ensuring accurate and respectful representation of indigenous cultures? What can be done in order to prevent the harmful-usage of media?
- What roles should NGOs and international frameworks play in preserving indigenous cultures, and how can their involvement be balanced with respect for national sovereignty and indigenous self-governance?
- How should SPECPOL address decolonization in the 21st century?

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