Believe Survivors
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At a webinar held earlier this month, the book "Looking Back and Looking Forward" written by Colin Nicholas was launched.

The book was presented by Gam Shimray and Ann Nourgam.

This series was conceived as a resource material for the course on "Indigenous Peoples' Self-Government and Democracy", with the main objective to catalyze the uncovering and recovering process of indigenous values and governance system.
In his special presentation on "Civic Space and Self-governance of Indigenous Peoples: Why we need to go back to the root", Mr. Colin Nicholas focused on the element of Spirituality as the base of the right to self-determination and Indigenous governance system.

"Indigenous spirituality is about acknowledgement that they are equal beings with others – animate and inanimate, seen and unseen – in the created world. “

"Indigenous spirituality governs Indigenous Peoples lives. Just as religion does for most people."

“The location of indigenous spirituality is in a community’s own traditional territory.”

In addition, Rukka Sombolinggi talked about the struggles of Indigenous People in Indonesia for their rights of self-determination,

"We are not a static community, we are dynamic. We have the ability to respond to change."
Mr. Patrick Earle, speaking from Sydney, highlighted the importance of the course on “Indigenous Peoples’ Self-government and Democracy”.

“This is what makes this program very important. By sharing experiences, by exchanging our stories of success from different parts of the world but also the challenges that we face, that we learn and we gain strength. “

He reflected on how in this particular moment of crisis, there is an appreciation perhaps now more than ever of Indigenous knowledge, of relationship to land and resources, of the knowledge of living in this world.
Launch of THE RIGHT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION: DIVERSE PEOPLES, ONE STRUGGLE” course

Indigenous Peoples have their own unique governance systems. However, these indigenous governance systems are slowly diminishing in practice and acceptance in many indigenous societies in Asia.

AIPP organized a launching ceremony of a course on “Indigenous Peoples’ Self-government and Democracy” virtually on 29th October at 7 pm (Bangkok time). Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact is conducting this training course for Indigenous Peoples in Asia.

In his welcome speech, Mr. Gam A. Shimray, Secretary General of AIPP said why the right of self-determination is at the heart of Indigenous Peoples’ aspiration. In Asia, before colonization, indigenous governance system, which is different from the liberal form of democracy, was perhaps the only form of the democratic governance system. It is a highly functional governance system due to the complementary nature of the community – which is based on the principles of equity, equality, reciprocity, and reconciliation.

He also added, in the indigenous world, morality exists not because I have the capacity to reason, but morality is there because I need to reason not to harm other people and other living things in order to protect our existence.

Often, self-determination is narrowly understood as a resistance to external forces. However, it encompasses the idea of how we internally self-govern ourselves as well as how we can co-exist with others. Democratic values are the building blocks of nationalism and self-determination. It is an internal reflective process as much as it is about engagement with the external entities for creating the national cultural narratives and institutional structures and processes for an inclusive society to thrive.

Mr. Tuomas Aslak Juuso, president of Sami Parliament, Finland inaugurated the launching programme.
Our Secretary General Mr. Gam A. Shimray facilitated the launching course on “Indigenous Peoples’ Self-government and Democracy” by sharing the main purposes and values:

1. Catalyze and build capacities of Indigenous leaders and scholars.

2. Build regional and country level movements on self-determination and self-government.

3. Form a pool of Indigenous leaders and scholars to reinforce indigenous leadership and bolster capacity building and mobilization at local and country level.

EVENT LINK:

https://www.facebook.com/AIPPnet.org/videos/250200003747783
In this op-ed co-authored by AIPP Secretary-General Gam A. Shimray, the European Commission must consult with Indigenous Peoples on the ways to arrest deforestation by recognising their right to self-determination,

"The European Commission must recognise deforestation is not only about the environment but human rights, especially for indigenous peoples.

Europe is the second biggest importer of agricultural goods linked to deforestation and the European Commission is preparing a regulation that would prevent such products gaining entry to the European market. Yet the commission’s solution addresses only half the problem.

The proposed regulation fails to recognise that forests are not just an ecosystem: they are also home to millions of forest peoples. For indigenous peoples, the destruction of forests is explicitly linked to human-rights violations. These include dispossession of our customary lands and resources, threats and violence, as well as loss of access to food, clean water and our traditional medicines, destruction of our culture and spirituality and devaluation of our right to self-determination—and the cultural, spiritual and material impoverishment these violations entail."

Read it in full here
https://socialeurope.eu/deforestation-an-attack-on-the...
While explaining the tradition of “jhum cultivation” or shifting cultivation that was a common practice in the past and is now practiced by a few, he makes ignorant remarks about how “Tribal log jo hote hain humare, dimaag toh hota nahi unke paas koi...” (Our tribal people do not have brains). He goes on to say that tribals do not have land ownership documentation either.

The video has created a lot of furore over our existing education system where educators themselves expose their affiliation to superficial knowledge about the indigenous community. However, the estranged trio of indigenous tribal groups, the Indian education system, and its educators with savior complexes is not a foreign concept. What’s foreign is the source that these educators refer to or rather recite while addressing the indigenous community. A colonial approach that has been naturalized and their stereotypes have been adopted as the identifiers of the community.

The scope of education has reached an extensive audience, but what happens in the classroom paints a different reality of regressive pedagogy. The dynamism of the Indian education sector is inclusive only in theory. It largely purveys to an audience for whom indigenous communities are but a question in an entrance exam that if answered correctly will earn them marks.

Read the full story here

Ensure Santals’ land rights
What good can an EPZ do if it makes people homeless?

It is appalling to see how the Santal community in Gaibandha’s Gobindaganj upazila are under continuous threats of eviction from what they call their ancestral land. According to a report published by this daily yesterday, the government is planning to set up an export processing zone (EPZ) in the area for which 1,500 families—mostly Santals—might have to be evicted. The same Santal community was attacked on November 6, 2016 as police, with the help of local influential people, tried to evict them from their land and also opened fire on them. Three Santal men were killed in the attack while hundred others were injured. As their houses were set on fire and looted, about 2,500 Santal and Bangalee families in the area, known as Bagda Farm, lost their belongings.

Five years into the attack, the victim families have not been provided with any compensation or rehabilitation. While a case was filed after the attack by a member of the community, unfortunately, the proceedings of the case have not started yet.

And now the government has decided to establish an EPZ on the 1,832.27 acres of land. Reportedly, the Ministry of Industries, which claims ownership of the land, will hand it over to the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) soon. Sadly, the decision was taken without holding any discussion with members of the Santal community, who claim to be the rightful owners of the land.

The government should reconsider its decision to build an EPZ that will make many Santal families homeless and jobless. Before handing over the land to Bepza, the authorities should hold discussions with the Santal community to address their grievances. And, if the government must build an EPZ in the area, they must ensure that all the Santal families are rehabilitated, with the opportunity to find decent employment.
Since many indigenous communities of the country, including the Santals, often face threats of eviction from local influential people, and sometimes, from the people in the local administration, we think it is time the government took some serious measures to ensure their land rights.

While it is the state's responsibility to ensure that indigenous communities of the country have the freedom to enjoy all their rights, including the right to their ancestral land, it is also the state's duty to make sure that these communities get justice for the attacks carried out on them over the years. The Santal community of Gaibandha's Gobindaganj upazila deserves justice and the right to live a dignified life on their own land.

fbclid=IwAR23ZB3_zufnoC07fmeVRRFZaaEUw4jN8EYPZpWUzJnGdjqiBZ6q4e3NB_0
Docip has published the latest information on the 10th Forum on Business and Human Rights, happening online from November 29 to December 1, 2021

Since its creation in 2011, the annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights has brought together thousands of participants from governments, international organizations, business, trade unions, civil society, communities, lawyers and academia from around the world. Centred on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) – the global framework for States and businesses to prevent and address business-related impacts on human rights – the Forum has provided a unique multi-stakeholder platform for discussing trends and challenges in implementing the UNGPs and realizing a more sustainable global economy. As the UNGPs turned 10 in June 2021, the convergence of the COVID-19 and climate crises amid a number of other major global challenges underlined why the need to bridge the gaps between economic actors and respect for people and the planet is more pressing than ever. Set against this background, with the UNGPs as the central reference point for efforts toward bridging these gaps, the 10th annual Forum looks ahead to the next decade, engaging relevant actors in discussion on what it will take to increase the pace of UNGPs implementation toward 2030. Due to the ongoing worldwide challenges the COVID19 pandemic continues to pose, the 10th Forum will take place virtually from 29 November to 1 December 2021. The Forum was established by the UN Human Rights Council and is guided and chaired by the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights. It is organized by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).
Focus of the 2021 Forum: a roadmap for action and key issues for the next decade of business and human rights

June 2021 marked the tenth anniversary of the unanimous endorsement by the Human Rights Council of the UNGPs. A major step forward in efforts to prevent and address business-related human rights abuse, they provide a common platform for action as the global authoritative framework for State duties and business responsibilities to achieve the UNGPs' vision of "tangible results for affected individuals and communities, and thereby also contributing to a socially sustainable globalization." The 10th Forum provides a timely opportunity to look ahead and inspire a renewed push for scaled-up global implementation of the UNGPs by States and businesses in the decade toward 2030. Two outputs by the Working Group developed at the occasion of the UNGPs 10th anniversary provide a key reference for discussions at the 2021 Forum:

- The Working Group’s evaluation of the first decade of UNGPs implementation, presented in its “UNGPs 10+ stocktaking” report to the Human Rights Council in June 2021 and accompanied by a stocktaking on implementation by institutional investors.
- The Working Group’s “roadmap for the next decade”, setting out benchmarks and action areas for States, businesses and other stakeholders to address existing gaps and seize current opportunities identified by the UNGPs 10+ stocktaking. The “roadmap” is forthcoming in October/November 2021.
Together with other work done by the Working Group and OHCHR, these two outputs will help inform discussions between the different actors, including governments, businesses, civil society, trade unions, indigenous peoples, human rights defenders, national human rights institutions, academics, international organizations and others. Discussions in the Forum will allow all participants to share their perspectives on what’s next and what is needed to overcome the coherence and implementation gaps identified by the UNGPs 10+ assessment and realize the pathways for faster and wider UNGPs’ implementation and lasting impact toward 2030 that the UNGPs 10+ roadmap will set out. In addition to plenary sessions and regional dialogues revolving around trends, challenges and opportunities for the UNGPs’ implementation, a number of thematic sessions will examine both long-standing and emerging issues such as the following:

- Connecting the UNGPs and climate change agendas
- Realizing an optimum “smart mix” of legal and policy measures, including effective mandatory human rights due diligence
- Addressing coherence gaps in State policy and practice to protect human rights, including in responses to the socio-economic crisis due to the pandemic
- The need to integrate human rights considerations in the key policy areas that shape economic activity such as the international investment agreements (building on the Working Group’s 2021 report to the General Assembly, A/76/238)
- Tackling the persisting and growing threats to human rights defenders speaking up against business-related harm to people and the planet
- Evaluating different efforts to improving access to remedy for rights-holders affected by business-related harm
- Implications of mandatory human rights due diligence for small and medium-size enterprises
- Developing better and more systematic tracking of State and business performance
- Ensuring that most at-risk rights-holders are at the centre of the next decade’s State and business efforts to prevent and address human rights harm
“Young people are drivers of positive change.” - Ms. Francesca Gilli

Ms. Francesca Gilli, Cooperation Attaché, Delegation of the European Union to Thailand said the 2021 Asia Land forum is related to land and Sustainable Development Goals and particularly this session on Indigenous women and youth is an intersection of several SDGs and several policies. It is also in line with the several policies of the EU.

Ms. Gilli mentioned the EU values, the EU is founded on values and respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights including the rights of persons belonging to the minority, community or marginalized and vulnerable communities.

AIPP along with International Land Coalition, Asia (ILC) organized the 2021 Asia Land Forum virtually from 27 October to 29 October with the theme of Securing Land Rights and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The topic of the session on 28 October was “Indigenous women and youth as change-makers in conservation and land rights” organized by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact. AIPP’s Indigenous Women Programme Coordinator, Ms. Pragyaa Rai coordinated the session where Ms. Francesca Gilli delivered her opening remarks.

Ms Gilli said gender equality is a core value of the European Union. As a key political objective of our external action of forum policy. We also believe that young people are drivers of positive change. Our action in partner countries is guided by the European consensus on development with recognizes youth as a key driver of sustainable development and women and girls as agents for development and changes. The European Consensus underline the commitment of the EU to work through a human rights-based approach. So, today’s topic and forum are in general very much in line with our policy, she added.
At the Forum, Ms Gilli focused on 3 points, - 1. women, girls and youth are facing barriers. So, how can we break the barriers? How can we promote access to resources? Access to Education, water, lands? How can we promote access to information and this is the second point? The third point is how to create community leaders. Women and youth can be community leaders, and they have to become key drivers in their communities especially in the Indigenous Peoples communities. How women and youth can reclaim their spaces, is not about protecting but it is about preventing, it is about promoting rights and principles, and being a positive agent for change.

She said the EIDHR programme of the EU is contributing to the project of AIPP. From this year the EU will have a new instrument, call Global Europe, that will cover several policies including human rights, and will work with CSOs, community-based organizations, she informed.

Finally, Ms Gilli expressed her feelings of pride to support AIPP’s project and all the partners that are contributing to implement the project on “Enhancing Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Defenders Network in Asia for Advancement of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”.
In the context of the 2021 UN Forum on Business and Human Rights and as a follow up to the COP26, the Zero Tolerance Initiative along with IWGIA, AIPP, Forest People’s Programme, The Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, human rights defenders, indigenous leaders and community representatives from all regions are organising an unofficial side event.

Voices from the Ground: Tackling the growing threats to human rights defenders, indigenous leaders and local communities through business and government respect for collective land rights

One of the key demands raised by indigenous defenders at COP26 was for collective land rights of indigenous peoples to be recognized as a key climate solution. ZTI’s work has emphasized that the lack of recognition and implementation of collective rights of indigenous peoples is a key driver of attacks against them. This event will demonstrate how greater respect for land rights is crucial both for the success of the UNGPs implementation in the next decade and to the success of the climate agreement coming out of COP26. At the heart of both of these two processes lies the safety of human rights defenders, who are negatively impacted by poor implementation of collective land rights, but are key to the defence of land rights, environment and forests, and are crucial partners in informing responsible business practices.

2nd December.

21:00 - 22:30 Bangkok

Register here https://tinyurl.com/2p8d57uj
UNDESA is organizing an international expert meeting on Indigenous Peoples, business, autonomy and the human rights principles of due diligence, including free, prior and informed consent on 6 to 10 December 2021.

Proposed themes for discussion:
Indigenous Peoples, FPIC and human rights due diligence
Business operations and reprisals against indigenous peoples and their defenders
Indigenous Peoples’ led business enterprises and autonomies
Addressing the implementation gap through National Action Plans, proposed treaty on business and human rights and other initiatives
Effective remedy and redress for human rights impacts of businesses on indigenous peoples

Registration is open for the following:
Indigenous peoples’ representatives and organizations
Member States
UN system entities
NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC
Academia

Registration is open bit.ly/3ni0NhB
In recent years, there has been growing attention and effort towards securing the formal, legal recognition of land rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Communities and Indigenous Peoples are estimated to hold as much as 65 percent of the world’s land area under customary systems, yet many governments formally recognize their rights to only a fraction of those lands.

Source: RRI

In Asia, Indigenous Peoples and local communities also hold traditional ownership over far more land than is formally recognized. In Indonesia, less than one quarter of 1 percent (approximately 0.2 percent) of the country’s lands is currently recognized as community-owned or controlled. In India, it is estimated that only 1.2 percent of customarily held forest lands has been formally recorded and recognized.

Source: RRI

Join us as we examine the scale and scope of the lessons learnt and the challenges IPHRDs face ahead regionally and globally in this crucial exchange

For details, please click here

https://aippnet.org/.../regional-iphrd-exchange.../...
10th November is the 38th death anniversary of the great revolutionary leader, Manabendra Narayan Larma. Today IP organizations and CSOs in Bangladesh are celebrating this day with the tribute to MN Larma. MN Larma as a parliamentarian urged to national parliament of Bangladesh to recognize the self-determination of IPs in the 1st constitution. He was the founder of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS).

On this day in 1983, M N Larma along with eight co-fighters embraced martyrdom on receiving bullet-hit injuries at wee hours during a treacherous armed attack of an opportunist and power-monger gang hidden in the party. An article on M N Larma written by Mong Shanoo Chowdhury was published in AIPP’s book, "IP Heroes and Martyrs in Asia (2014)"
For this year’s UN Women #16DaysofActivism against violence against women, we are thrilled to announce the upcoming launch of the sixth edition of HerStory, which is a book that focuses on the undisputed role Indigenous Women have played in the fight for gender justice while facing immense structural and systemic challenges as guardians of lands and territories as well as healers and custodians of indigenous knowledge they have protected for future generations of Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Women today face politically motivated killings, extrajudicial killings, the militarization of the ancestral territories, forced eviction, harassment, threats and intimidation, vilification as insurgents or supporters of insurgents, forced recruitment to paramilitary groups, sexual violence including rape, abandonment of impregnated women by state forces, among others.

Let us #breakthesilence & #OrangeTheWorld

The human rights of indigenous women, and their access to justice and remedies, are closely linked to their identity as Indigenous Peoples which are connected to their right to their land, territory and resources.

When we protect Indigenous Women we ensure a more equitable future for the world. When we stand up for Indigenous Women we stand up for the future.

Watch this space for HerStory6!
Art: Themreichan Kasom
Instagram: k_free_art
"We are mainly indebted to our Indigenous heroes for keeping our mountains, rivers, and forests in our country alive. They are the frontliners in protecting our environment and keeping the rich biodiversity of our mountains and rivers. This is why we honor our Indigenous heroes and martyrs for offering their lives and their strength to defend the environment and their ancestral lands. It is their very life."
Adivasis are crucial to any conversation involving the climate. Their worldview professes respect and reverence for the forests, mountains, waterbodies, and wildlife. Several indigenous climate activists from around the world are currently participating at the ongoing Glasgow climate summit (COP 26) demanding the inclusion of indigenous communities in the fight for climate justice.

From India, two activists Archana Soreng and Alice Barwa among others, are representing Adivasi voices at the summit.

In a Zoom interview to Vikalp Sangam, a collective that works towards alternative solutions to conserving the ecosystem, Soreng said that the inclusion of indigenous people at the summit is a sign that the access to decision-making space is opening up for them. According to her, an important element of this inclusion must involve the realization that the Adivasi way of life protects nature and that there is a need to support and enable it on a global scale.

“The first step in the fight for climate justice is recognizing and respecting the worldview of indigenous people. Indigenous communities are not part of nature but we are nature itself. Our lives used to be termed backward and we were made to feel inferior because of it but now the world is realizing our importance,” said Archana. The climate activist belongs to the Kharia tribe of Odisha and is part of the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’ advisory group.

Read the full report here

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 2007, which was voted by 144 states in favour of it. Even though most Asian countries have adopted it, they have to yet recognize and internalize the term ‘Indigenous Peoples’. As a result, most of the Indigenous Peoples in the region continue to face multiple forms of discriminations and marginalization at the local and national levels. Additionally, intersectionality’s within Indigenous communities also face further discrimination specifically; Indigenous women and Indigenous persons with disabilities (IPwD).

It is estimated that there are 411 million Indigenous Peoples in Asia that makes it the ethnically most diverse continent of the world. Indigenous Peoples in Asia have been governing and managing their lands, territories and resources through their traditional institutions, customary laws and sustainable resource management practices for generations. Their way of life embodies a custodial concept of land and natural resources. Indigenous Peoples conceive the land as a living entity, with a spirituality and sacredness of its own. Indigeneity is defined and connected to land and is the sole meaning of Indigenous Peoples whole life and well-being. Moreover, land is the basis for their livelihood survival and also related to their history, ancestry and identities.

Consistent with their worldview, a vast body of knowledge was amassed over the centuries through experimentation and experience. This body of knowledge, as it came to be applied to various aspects of their life, has been continuously enriched through experimentation and innovations i.e., their institutions, law, resource use, technology, art forms, etc. Yet Indigenous Knowledge (IK) has been ignored as primitive, superstitious and unscientific and thereby unsuited for modern application. Over the years there has been increasing evidence, acceptance and progress towards the value of
IK and the need to protect it, specifically its applicability in the field of conservation of biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation. This offers a window of opportunity for wider recognition and respect of IK.

Vietnam and other countries in Asia are based on their Indigenous Knowledge transferred and evolved through generations.

Much of the scientific community is now recognizing that Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Peoples application of this knowledge to ecological conservation has contributed to the protection of some of the world’s remaining intact forest landscapes. This recognition has evolved to include IK in conservation efforts to solve the prevailing environmental issues at present; like food insecurities, health, environmental degradation and climate change. Evidence that is supporting its importance alongside mainstream “scientific knowledge”.

AIPP and ODI aim to develop a framework of principles known as “Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS)”, which outlines the interests vested and inherited in Indigenous communities to collectively own and control the collection, analysis, and presentation of Indigenous data and knowledge about themselves that reflect the key values and ways of knowing.

For details, please click here https://bit.ly/3FFa5L3