

Dear Indigenous Sisters, Brothers, and Allies,

Season's Greetings from AIPP!

As the year draws to a close, we find ourselves reflecting on the journey we have undertaken together and the milestones we have achieved as a community. It is with great joy and gratitude that we share with you the key achievements of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) throughout the past year which is centered on celebrating indigenous communities for the crucial and critical work as stewards of their lands and territories, a significant challenge given the existential threats from shrinking civic spaces and dismantling of democracies to our collective journey towards self-determination.

Through initiatives like the Centers of Excellence in Village Governance in Thailand and Malaysia, we have adopted a multidimensional approach to uphold and promote the rights of Indigenous Peoples, ensuring our voices are heard, our unique perspectives are respected and our participation is meaningful. We hope this recognition and setting of benchmarks will encourage more indigenous communities to map and monitor their progress towards developing indigenous community protocols centered on identity and spirituality which lie at the root of our advocacy.

AIPP has been at the forefront of advocacy efforts to shape policies that directly impact indigenous communities. Our collaborative endeavors have resulted in significant strides in securing and defending our rights at local, national, and international levels. The impact of our collective voice has been felt in various policy discussions, influencing positive change and promoting inclusivity, most recently in the House of Representatives, the lower house of the National Assembly of Thailand with the presentation of the Indigenous Peoples Draft Bill. A momentous step after a decade long unrelenting struggle of indigenous leaders advocating for the collective rights of forty-six indigenous communities in Thailand. The Draft Bill once passed will ensure the State's recognition of Indigenous Peoples, the "Chon Phao Phuen Muang", a welcome departure from the current categorization as Thai ethnic groups; leading to in no uncertain terms, the recognition of the unique identities, cultures, and protection of the livelihoods of the Indigenous Peoples of Thailand.

In alignment with our commitment to sustainable development, AIPP has spearheaded initiatives that prioritize environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and livelihood empowerment such as developing the Indigenous Knowledge and Data Sovereignty framework and the Indigenous Navigator project in consultation with our country partners. We are acutely aware that missing data means missing people; therefore, these initiatives aim to create a harmonious balance between protection and the preservation of indigenous cultures and ecosystems through data collection from indigenous communities by indigenous communities. We also made compelling arguments through narratives and counter narratives by indigenous journalists who form the bulwark of indigenous affairs by generating public interest media aimed at changing public opinion.

Throughout the year, AIPP has facilitated knowledge exchange programs, workshops, and training sessions that aim to build leadership across sub regions involving diverse intersectional indigenous groups. By fostering a culture of learning and innovation, such as our interventions regarding the impact of emerging technologies and Artificial Intelligence, we continue to strengthen our resilience in all directions.

And as we have sustained a culture of sharing and paying it forward, we have also forged critical partnerships with like-minded organizations and stakeholders. These partnerships have allowed us to

amplify our impact and extend our reach, creating a network of solidarity and support for indigenous communities.

As we celebrate these achievements, we also acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. The journey towards justice, equality, and empowerment is ongoing, and we are committed to facing these challenges head-on in the coming year.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to you for your continued support and collaboration. Your dedication to the cause of indigenous rights has been instrumental in the success of AIPP's endeavors.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season and a prosperous New Year. May the indigenous spirit of unity and shared purpose continue to guide us in the pursuit of a world where the rights and dignity of all Indigenous Peoples are upheld and celebrated.

Onwards and upwards!

In solidarity,

Gam A. Shimray
Secretary-General
Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact

