

APRCEM STATEMENT

Mobilizing and sharing science, technology and innovation for an SDG driven recovery

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This statement is delivered on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples Major for Sustainable Development (IPMG) and the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCEM).

Indigenous Peoples, farmers, and local communities are experiencing increasing threats to their lives, territories and resources, traditional knowledge and practices, even during the pandemic, due to development priorities of states that does not respect their right to development and meaningful engagement and the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples. The inclusion of Indigenous Peoples knowledge and knowledge systems in modern technology should include strong safeguards to uphold the common good, ensure human rights based approach that prevent the exploitation and expropriation of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous peoples' ways of life and knowledge rooted in interconnectedness, reciprocity, and respect for nature can greatly complement modern technology. While there's increasing recognition on indigenous knowledge in global processes, how it is recognized and respected at the country level is still very far off.

Technological innovations may bring benefits in the COVID19 recovery but these should be made accessible to developing countries and communities and not controlled by mega corporations by using intellectual property rights. Corporate-led digital and technological takeover of the agricultural, industrial and services sectors requires careful consideration of its economic, political and socio-cultural implications despite the purported benefits they bring taking seriously into account the disparate level of technological advancement across countries. Further, technological advances in agriculture particularly GMOs and nanotechnology among others are major concerns for farmers, indigenous peoples, and communities as it adversely impacts human health and environment. It promotes hybrid, genetically modified seeds heavy on agricultural inputs which has detrimental effects to local and traditional seeds and to the food sovereignty of the people.

The rapid technological advances including the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and expanding digitalisation will continue to shape and re-shape the world of work, living and learning. The reality of wide disparities in access to technology and huge power imbalances in the ownership of these technologies will result in further inequalities.

On education, a digital divide exists between the privileged and the underprivileged, between urban and rural areas, between high-income and low-income countries, and between those fluent in the languages most represented in the online world and those who are not. Corporate capture of digital learning and other education delivery modalities including privatization of education should be prevented consistent with the principles on equitable, accessible, non-discriminatory and inclusive education.

Finally, policy emphasis on digitization and technological advancements must ensure a thorough review of the potential adverse effects on livelihoods, the economy, environment, society, culture, and civil & political rights and collective rights of the people.