

AFTER 2015: PROMOTING PRO-POOR POLICY AFTER THE MDGS

“Particularity and Inclusion: Why the MDGs do not address the unique needs of Indigenous peoples.”

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The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) constitute a benchmark for minimum standards of health, education and livelihoods, and demand that signatory countries ensure that the lives of their people accord with these minimum standards. This paper contends that the MDG paradigm has not had the intended positive impact upon particular groups which experience a higher incidence of poverty and disadvantage than others, namely Indigenous¹ communities in both developed and developing countries. By examining the situation of Indigenous peoples in the two very different contexts of the Philippines and Australia, this paper offers three arguments in support of its thesis. First, it argues that systematic discrimination against Indigenous peoples is not effectively addressed by the MDGs and, without challenging the discourses and power structures which continue to impoverish Indigenous groups, the MDGs are ineffective in addressing Indigenous poverty. Particular criticism is directed at the systems in place for reporting on progress towards the MDGs, since failure to require that countries provide disaggregated data on the progress of Indigenous populations towards the MDGs² absorbs them into broader country averages and masks their entrenchment in situations of extreme poverty. Secondly, this paper addresses some of the major global processes and ‘game changers’ shaping the progress of the Philippines and Australia towards the achievement of the MDGs and the effect this has had upon their Indigenous populations. This paper considers how the Philippines has sought to fund development through policies such as foreign investment in mining, which deprive Indigenous people of their lands and identities; and how Australia, which has ignored the MDGS in the domestic context, has implemented discriminatory poverty reduction strategies targeting the Australian Indigenous population with limited measurable outcomes. Thirdly, having criticised the MDG paradigm, this paper submits that a new development paradigm of Particularity and Inclusion be constructed

¹ “Indigenous” means:

“Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system.”

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division of Social Policy and Development, Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), “The Concept of Indigenous Peoples.” 2004, 2.

www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/workshop_data_background.doc.

² Victoria Corpuz, “Making the MDGs Relevant for Indigenous Peoples.” ECOSOC High Level Segment, 16-17 March 2005, 3. www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/vtc_ecosoc_05.doc.

which addresses the particular needs of Indigenous communities and includes them in the decision-making processes which affect their lives and futures.

1. The impact of the MDG paradigm on poverty reduction in Indigenous communities.

Although Indigenous peoples represent only 5% of the global population, they constitute 15% of the world's poor.³ Despite this over-representation the MDGs do not specifically refer to Indigenous peoples, a failing conspicuous in the face of evidence that Indigenous peoples are marginalised in the delivery of aid programmes otherwise intended to achieve the MDGs. It is the role of governments and, through them, the corporate and the non-government sectors, to deliver programs designed to bring about improvements in specific poverty indicators. However, due to public spending which "systematically discriminates against minorities and Indigenous peoples," these groups are in many cases ignored.⁴ The discrimination to which Indigenous peoples are subject differentiates their experience of poverty from poverty as it is experienced by majority populations, meaning that Indigenous peoples' economic, political and socio-cultural systems are consistently undermined by social exclusion.⁵ Until this discrimination is addressed, Indigenous poverty cannot be adequately addressed and Indigenous development will continue to lag behind improvements being achieved in majority populations. As the MDGs do not directly challenge these discriminatory discourses and power structures, governments are able to adhere to the MDGs without addressing the causes of the unique forms of poverty experienced by Indigenous peoples.

Further to the failure of the MDGs to demand specific action on Indigenous poverty and its causes, the reporting system used in this development paradigm masks the specific forms and degrees of poverty experienced by Indigenous peoples. This is because countries report on progress towards the MDGs by using population averages, rather than data disaggregated upon the basis of ethnicity.⁶ In its review of MDG country reports, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) found that 20% sufficiently included Indigenous people by consistently reporting on their situation; 50% addressed Indigenous issues to varying degrees; while 30% made no reference to Indigenous peoples. None of the country reports reviewed indicated that they were prepared in consultation with Indigenous peoples' organisations and none provided comprehensive disaggregated data for

³ International Fund for Agricultural Development, "Statistics and Key Facts about Indigenous People." 2007. www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/topic/statistics/tags/indigenous%20peoples.

⁴ UNDP Human Development Report 2004, "Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World." 2004, 20. www.hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2004/chapters/.

⁵ Corpuz, n1, 2.

⁶ Bonney Hartley, "MDG Reports and Indigenous Peoples." Secretariat of the UNPFII, No. 3, Feb 2008, 35-36. www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/MDG_Reports_and_IPs_2008.pdf.

Indigenous peoples.⁷ The result is exclusion of Indigenous peoples from average poverty rates and indicators and concealment of their unique experience of poverty.⁸

(a) The Philippines

The Executive Summary of the 2006 Philippine Progress Report on the MDGs asserts that “poverty eradication has emerged as a top priority of the Philippine government from the late 1980s.”⁹ Although this statement is verified by positive overall progress towards the MDGs, the Philippines 2007 midterm report on the MDGs acknowledges that the benefits of poverty reduction programmes have not been evenly distributed. When reporting on progress towards Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger, the midterm report states that “the Philippines is on track in meeting its target of halving the proportion of people below the food threshold... However, there is cause for concern if one looks at subsistence incidence rates of population by region”¹⁰ and that “efforts to reduce poverty must reach all regions of the country indicating [the need for] progressive instead of regressive measures.”¹¹ Although the report does not refer explicitly to Indigenous peoples, this regional imbalance in poverty reduction levels gives some indication of the extent to which Indigenous communities are lagging behind other sectors of the population in progress towards the MDGs. The Philippine region with the highest subsistence incidence rate is Mindanao,¹² a predominantly Indigenous area.¹³ Similarly, the Cordillera in Northern Luzon is a region in which approximately 80% of inhabitants identify as Indigenous.¹⁴ The people of the Cordillera experience poverty indicators exceeding national averages, such as an infant mortality rate of 29 deaths per 1,000 live births, which exceeds the national average of 24 deaths per 1,000 live births.¹⁵ Such examples typify the general observation that regions with the highest concentration of Indigenous peoples experience the highest incidence of poverty across a range of indicators. This correlation has been attributed by Indigenous advocacy groups to entrenched discrimination: “[l]ong-standing distortions of history and culture in school curricula, textbooks and the mass media have not been rectified, thus allowing misconceptions and discriminatory attitudes against Indigenous peoples to persist.”¹⁶ For progress towards the MDGs to affect equally Indigenous and non-Indigenous Filipinos, more must be done than merely allocating “regions with poverty incidence rates above the national average ...

⁷ UNPFII, n6, 35.

⁸ As a means of addressing this issue, Indigenous people have a standing recommendation which has been raised in all sessions of the UNPFII, that data disaggregated on the basis of ethnicity be presented as part of every MDG country report: UNPFII, “The Message Stick: Quarterly Newsletter of the UNPFII.” Vol. 4, no. 2, April–June 2006, 3.

⁹ UNDP Philippines, “Second Philippine Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals.” 2006, 1. www.undp.org.ph/link=4.

¹⁰ UNDP Philippines, “Philippines Midterm Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals.” 2007, 24. www.undp.org.ph/link=4

¹¹ UNDP, n10, 25.

¹² UNDP, n10, 24.

¹³ International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), “Indigenous People in the Philippines.” www.iwgia.org/sw16704.asp

¹⁴ Joan Carling, “Indigenous Peoples, the Environment and Human Rights in the Philippines: The Cordillera Experience.” 2001. www.asiasource.org/asip/carling.cfm/#cordillera.env

¹⁵ UNDP, n10, 33.

¹⁶ IWGIA, n13.

more than a proportionate share of resources.”¹⁷ While undoubtedly a positive step, a greater share of resources does not address the underlying issue of discrimination which causes and perpetuates Indigenous disadvantage. Until this issue is addressed, Indigenous Filipinos will not experience the impact of progress towards the MDGs in the same way as their non-Indigenous counterparts.

(b) *Australia*

Despite Australia’s status as signatory to the MDGs, its government has thus far made no attempt to integrate the goals into domestic policy and therefore has not produced an MDG Progress Report. This situation prevails despite the well-documented poverty¹⁸ experienced by Australian Indigenous peoples (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples). While Australian Indigenous people consist of more than 250 language groups¹⁹ and represent a great diversity of cultures and development needs, they constitute only 2.5% of the Australian population.²⁰ Yet, despite their relatively small number, indicators such as life expectancy, which is some 17 years less than for other Australians, are a reminder that Indigenous people continue to rank lowest on all social and economic indicators.²¹

If the Australian government had sought to implement the MDG paradigm, similar problems to those in countries reporting on MDG progress would arise when attempting to measure Indigenous progress towards development. In particular, a lack of disaggregated statistics obscures the status of Indigenous Australians, although attempts have been made recently to address this deficiency. Since 2002, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has commissioned regular reports against key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage.²² These reports, together with prominent reports such as the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS),²³ are gradually increasing the availability of disaggregated data relevant to specific poverty indicators.

Other developments which show a new approach to addressing Indigenous poverty include a commitment made by the Prime Minister, in 2007, to develop a new partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Additionally, the Prime Minister committed to halve the widening gap in literacy, numeracy and employment outcomes and opportunities for Indigenous children; halve the gap in infant mortality rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children; and, within a generation, to close the 17-year life expectancy gap

¹⁷ UNDP, n10, 25.

¹⁸ Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP), *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2007*, Productivity Commission, Canberra, 2007; Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey*, 41714.0, Canberra, 2007.

¹⁹ A. Barlow and M. Hill, *Languages*, Encyclopedia of Australia's Aboriginal Peoples, MacquarieNet 2003 (online edition).
<http://www.macquarienet.com.au/article?recid=REC273&db=macmillaborig>

²⁰ ABS, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population*, 1301.0 - Year Book Australia, 2008.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.NSF/bb8db737e2af84b8ca2571780015701e/68AE74ED632E17A6CA2573D200110075?opendocument>

²¹ SCRGSP, n18.

²² Two reports have been published: 2005; n18.

²³ ABS, *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2002* (Cat. no. 4714.0),

between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.²⁴ Further commitments were made by the government in 2008 when they signed a statement of intent to achieve equality of health status and life expectancy by 2030.²⁵

However, despite these positive steps by the government, concerns remain about the lack of goals and benchmarks to measure progress in addressing Indigenous poverty in Australia. Of particular concern is the Australian government's refusal, despite significant lobbying,²⁶ to frame Indigenous development in Australia within the MDG paradigm, thereby preventing assessment of poverty reduction in Australian Indigenous communities by comparison with other peoples living in extreme poverty.

2. The impact of major global processes or 'game changers' shaping development up to 2015 and beyond

As targets for eradication of extreme poverty, the MDGs are an overtly positive commitment. However, a number of the means by which progress towards the goals is being achieved cannot be considered positive. In the Philippines, the forces shaping development are in many cases driven by the influence of corporations, which "often go well beyond their market demands to maximise shareholder wealth subject to the market rules of the game and, instead, expend substantial efforts, often hidden under the table, to make the rules of the game themselves."²⁷ For example, mining is considered by the Philippine government as the means by which the MDGs will be achieved in the next six years to 2015. Too often, though, mining projects cause widespread displacement, diminish the rights of Indigenous peoples and direct the majority of profits overseas. Similarly in Australia, the major processes shaping development are ostensibly positive in motivation but in implementation pressure Indigenous communities to submit to development programmes which curtail or diminish their rights. An example of this is the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER), which promised to address the prevalence of child sexual abuse and, through related measures addressing health, education and employment opportunities, focus on bringing Indigenous peoples into the real economy. However, the NTER was planned and implemented without consultation with Indigenous Australians, to the diminution of their rights.

(a) Mining in the Philippines.

Having identified foreign investment in mining as a means by which it can reduce poverty, the Philippine government has been pursuing "an aggressive policy to 'revitalise' the mining industry, potentially opening up 30% of the country's land area to mining."²⁸ However, in comparison to other industry, mining contributes the least of

²⁴ Kevin Rudd, Apology Speech, 2008. http://www.pm.gov.au/media/speech/2008/speech_0073.cfm

²⁵ Australian Human Rights Commission, "Close the Gap: Indigenous Health Equality Summit Statement of Intent." March 20, 2008. http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/health/statement_intent.html

²⁶ Make Indigenous Poverty History campaign: www.makeindigenouspovertyhistory.org

²⁷ Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty*. Penguin, 2005, 358.

²⁸ Robert Goodland and Clive Wicks, "The Philippines: Mining or Food?" The Working Group on Mining in the Philippines, 2009, 1. <http://www.piplinks.org/miningorfood>.

any sector of the economy towards reducing poverty. “On the contrary, mining often increases poverty,”²⁹ particularly among Indigenous peoples, whose lands are frequently located in mineral-rich rural areas.³⁰ Ostensibly, the Philippine government supports the right, as expounded in the 1997 Philippine Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act (IPRA) of Indigenous people to “Free, Prior and Informed consent”³¹ to any development activity occurring on or affecting their lands. However, the 1995 Mining Act contradicts and, in many cases, overrides this right. One element of the Mining Act which has been particularly destructive to Indigenous rights is the provision that “the government commits itself to ensuring the removal of all ‘obstacles’ to mining, including settlements and farms.”³² According to the 2003 report of Special Rapporteur Stavenhagen United Nations this provision of the Mining Act is commonly invoked to allow open-pit mining and the construction of multi-purpose dams to be carried out without the “Free, Prior and Informed consent” of local Indigenous representatives.³³ As a result of the government’s prioritisation of foreign investment in mining, “Indigenous representatives perceive that the business interests of private enterprises, which over the years have encroached on their ancestral domains, are more protected than their own rights based on land use and continuous occupation.”³⁴

Such encouragement of foreign companies’ mining interests has led to several conflicts with Indigenous Filipinos, which in turn has prompted the militarisation of Indigenous lands. “Indigenous resistance and protest [to development aggression] are frequently countered by military force involving numerous human rights abuses.”³⁵ The Philippine government justified the introduction of legislation favouring foreign mining interests by emphasising putative long-term economic and development benefits: “[M]indful of the potential of mining in jumpstarting the moribund Philippine economy, the Government has embarked on a program to revitalize the industry that aims to balance mining development with socio-environmental concerns The mining industry has been given a new impetus to fulfil its role in the economic development of the country.”³⁶ However, according to one observer organisation, “there is virtually no evidence to support the assertion that increased mining has led to overall poverty reduction in the Philippines.”³⁷ Profits from mining are repatriated directly to the country of origin of the company responsible for the project.³⁸ Thus, rather than receiving economic benefits from mining, Indigenous Filipinos suffer the loss of lands, livelihoods and autonomy which their government and foreign corporations have forced upon them. They are the “sacrificial lambs”³⁹ of this global “game changer,” which leaders of the Philippines promote as a means to economic growth, even as it leads to “more poverty and hunger,

²⁹ Goodland and Wicks, n40, x.

³⁰ Christian Aid and PIPLinks, n52, 11.

³¹ The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, Chapter III: “Rights to Ancestral Domains,” Section 7c; and Chapter VI: “Cultural Integrity,” Sections 32, 33a, 35, 58, 59. 1997. http://philippines.ahrchk.net/news/mainfile.php/leg_sel/16

³² Christian Aid and PIPLinks, n52, 8.

³³ Rodolfo Stavenhagen, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous people: Mission to the Philippines.” 5 March, 2003, 1. [www.unhcr.ch/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.2003.90.Add.3.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.2003.90.Add.3.En?Opendocument)

³⁴ Stavenhagen, n56, 1.

³⁵ Rodolfo Stavenhagen, 2002 Mission to the Philippines. Quoted in Christian Aid and PIPLinks, n52, 21.

³⁶ Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines, “A Primer on Mining in the Philippines,” www.us.rpembassy.net/?p=28.

³⁷ Christian Aid and PIPLinks, n52, 17.

³⁸ Goodland and Wicks, n40, 3.

³⁹ Corpuz, n1, 1.

displacement, conflicts, and increasing violations of the rights of Indigenous peoples to their territories and resources.”⁴⁰

b) The NT Emergency Response in Australia

The NT Emergency Response (NTER) was announced by the Australian government on 21 June 2007, and was developed in response to an inquiry which concluded that child sexual abuse in NT Indigenous communities was severe and widespread.⁴¹ Key measures implemented by the NTER included restricting alcohol on NT Aboriginal land; welfare reforms which restricted how people could spend income support payments; child health checks; and the compulsory acquisition (and consequently the administration) of Aboriginal townships on five year leases.⁴² The NTER provoked widespread controversy amidst claims that the measures were extreme and gave rise to several concerns.⁴³

One key concern raised was that the NTER did not respond to any of the recommendations in the original report, nor did the measures taken specifically address the prevention of child abuse.⁴⁴ A second key concern was the suspension of the 1975 Racial Discrimination Act (RDA), which in effect deemed all NTER measures to be exempt from the RDA and removed the ability of people discriminated against by these measures to bring a complaint under the RDA.⁴⁵

These concerns were justified. In 2008, an independent review of the NTER published its report which, despite claims the government had altered its content,⁴⁶ was critical of the NTER, suggesting that the government should “reset their relationship with Aboriginal people based on genuine consultation, engagement and partnership”⁴⁷ and that all aspects of the NTER should conform with the RDA.⁴⁸ However, the report also recommended that as a “matter of urgent national significance,” the NTER continue.⁴⁹

It is difficult to assess the impact which this “game changer” has had on shaping development in Indigenous Australia, largely because of the lack of any comparative reporting or analysis. Without detailed benchmarks set prior to the NTER, the publication of figures detailing deployed resources is without context and therefore

⁴⁰ Corpuz, n1, 1.

⁴¹ Northern Territory Government, *Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle: “Little Children are Sacred.”* Report of the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse, 2007. www.inquirysaac.nt.gov.au/

⁴² Mal Brough, *National emergency response to protect Aboriginal children in the NT*, Media Release, FACHSIA, 2007. http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/nter/media_archive.htm

⁴³ See for example Tom Calma, *Social Justice Commissioner’s statement on the government’s ‘national emergency’ measures*, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2007. http://www.hreoc.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2007/44_07.html

⁴⁴ Calma, n43.

⁴⁵ Tom Calma, “Social Justice Report, 2007.” Chp 3. 2008. http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/sj_report/sjreport07/chap3.html

⁴⁶ Paul Toohey, “Rewrite takes sting out of NT report.” *The Australian*, October 2008. http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,24499037-2702,00.html?from=public_rss

⁴⁷ Northern Territory Emergency Response: Review Board Report, October 2008, 12.

http://www.nterreview.gov.au/docs/report_nter_review/docs/Report_NTER_Review_October08.pdf

⁴⁸ Review Board Report, n47, 12.

⁴⁹ Review Board Report n47, 12

meaningless. Of particular importance is the absence of data from progress reports⁵⁰ which would enable an analysis of how the NTER has contributed to a reduction in poverty among Indigenous Australians. Whether or not the NTER has achieved some improvement in key poverty indicators, it remains a development programme to which Indigenous communities in the NT were compelled to submit, despite the fact that it diminished their rights and was implemented without consultation. As a “game changer,” the NTER has sought in a number of ways to address the issue of Indigenous poverty and disadvantage. However, like mining in the Philippines, this development programme has had a detrimental impact upon many aspects of life for Indigenous people in the NT.

3. The new paradigm of Particularity and Inclusion

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) has repeatedly attempted to draw attention to the relevance of the MDGs to Indigenous peoples, most particularly in its Fifth Session (2006), entitled “The Millennium Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples: Redefining the Goals.” During this session Indigenous peoples spoke about the urgent need for the MDGs to be redefined in such a way that Indigenous peoples form an integral part of both the planning and the implementation of these goals and indicators.⁵¹ At a broader level, the UN has declared its support for the full participation of Indigenous peoples in the decision-making processes which affect their lives by adopting the Second International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People on 22 December 2004. The second major objective of the Decade is to promote “full and effective participation of Indigenous peoples in decisions which directly or indirectly affect their lifestyles, traditional lands and territories, [and] their cultural integrity as Indigenous peoples with collective rights.”⁵² Despite these statements overtly supporting the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the decisions and processes which affect their lives, the UN has failed to include, or focus particular attention upon, Indigenous peoples through the MDGs, despite the potential of this mechanism to reduce or even eradicate the poverty experienced by Indigenous peoples. If the MDG paradigm were to be reconstructed around a Particularity and Inclusion approach, through which all groups would be given an opportunity to participate in both the planning and implementation of this development paradigm, the particular needs of Indigenous peoples would be included and marginalisation of the world’s most impoverished peoples would not occur.

This paper does not seek to find fault with that element of the MDG paradigm which is concerned with goals; rather, the fault which must be redressed lies in the means by which the achievement of these goals is sought and monitored. Goals are a useful means by which benchmarks are set for all people. However, it needs to be acknowledged that all people are not at the same starting point from which they can work to achieve these goals. Due to their status as the world’s poorest people, Indigenous peoples come from a starting point far behind other

⁵⁰ Jenny Macklin, “Progress Report for the Northern Territory Emergency Response.” Media Release, 22 March 2009. http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/progress_nter_22mar2009.htm

⁵¹ UNPFII, “Millennium Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples: Factsheet 2.” http://un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet2.pdf

⁵² UNPFII, “Indigenous People and the Millennium Development Goals.” www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/mdgs/html.

population sectors in developing and developed countries – they are in a very particular situation with regards to development. Therefore, a consultative approach to planning this new development paradigm, which includes Indigenous representatives and which demands that countries particularise their Indigenous populations by monitoring their progress towards the goals, is essential.

Although they live in two very different contexts, the Indigenous peoples of the Philippines and Australia share common experiences of marginalisation and discrimination, resulting in their experiencing greater degrees of poverty than their non-Indigenous counterparts. If the MDGs had been applied inclusively and with particularity to each of these Indigenous populations, progress towards the measurable goals and indicators of this paradigm would have improved the poverty indicators for both Indigenous Filipinos and Australians. However, this has not occurred. In both contexts, “game changers” have been implemented without including the Indigenous populations in the formulation and implementation of such policies. The adoption of mining as a development strategy in the Philippines has not only failed to address the particular needs of Indigenous communities, but has had an adverse impact upon the lives of Indigenous people; while the intention of the NTER to target particular Indigenous Australian groups ultimately serves to entrench existing discriminatory discourse and power structures.

The Particularity and Inclusion paradigm needs to be used concurrently in the Philippines, in Australia and in all other parts of the world where the MDGs are, or should be, implemented. Without such a paradigm, there is a great risk that the MDGs will be achieved for some but, in the process, the poorest of the poor will be marginalised still further.

Conclusion

An attempt was made by the UN in 2007 to highlight the status of Indigenous peoples when the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted. Although this declaration was described by the UNPFII as a “crucial opportunity and call to action for states and the UN system to integrate Indigenous visions of development into their work towards the achievement of the MDGs,”⁵³ the fact that this acknowledgement of the specific need for Indigenous development came five years after the signing of the Millennium Declaration indicates that Indigenous peoples constituted a footnote to the MDGs rather than being placed at the centre of this development paradigm. This paper calls for all Indigenous people in both developed and developing countries to be included in and to receive particular attention through the implementation of the MDGs, thereby ensuring that the extreme poverty experienced by many Indigenous populations is addressed, rather than entrenched, by the MDGs.

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⁵³ UNPFII, n65.

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