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Agenda Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

Oral Statement by the Indian Law Resource Center and Amnesty International

Mr. President,

I am speaking on behalf of the Indian Law Resource Center and Amnesty International.

Poverty cannot be eradicated without the full respect for human rights. In this regard, the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty's May 2015 Report¹ to this Council stresses that the application of a human rights framework is critical in addressing extreme poverty and inequality. It is good to see in this session that so many countries support the Special Rapporteur's approach to tackle extreme poverty and inequality. We would like to know what countries seating at the Board of the World Bank are doing to incorporate strong human rights protection into the Bank's environmental and social safeguard policies currently under review.

However, international financial institutions with a poverty eradication mandate, such as the World Bank, refuse to adequately address human rights. As a result, development projects funded by these institutions frequently result in human rights violations against indigenous communities and other marginalized groups, who are often the poorest of the poor in developing countries.

Mr. President,

In December 2014, the Rapporteur, along with 27 U.N. mandate holders, sent a very important letter to the World Bank highlighting a number of human rights concerns regarding the Bank's first draft of its environmental and social safeguard policies. This letter affirms that the Bank's conduct is a matter of human rights concern, and we encourage the 28 U.N. experts to continue to address this concern.

However, in order to further ensure that development projects do contribute to poverty alleviation and do not lead to human rights violations, much more needs to be done here at the U.N. Action must be taken to specify that human rights standards must be respected in all activities financed by the World Bank and other international financial institutions. The reason is because the Bank is not likely to address human rights risks unless it is explicitly compelled to do so by its Member States.

Thank you.

¹ UN document A/HRC/29/31