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At UN, Civil Society Questions Pre-Screened on SDGs at HLPF, Austrian of IPU Says “Crazy”

By Matthew Russell Lee

UNITED NATIONS, July 19 – While the UN on its Sustainable Development Goals for three days this week held a “High Level Political Forum” in New York, when Inner City Press asked a panel of indigenous representatives on the first day about their rights to participate, the answer was discordant. It turns out that civil society could only question the Voluntary National Reports being presented by submitted questions in advance, to be pre-screened.

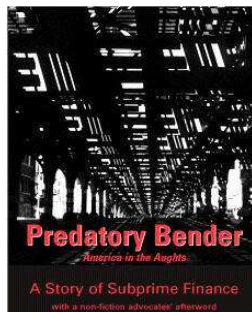
That is censorship, now too common at the UN.

While outgoing UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs official Wu Hongbo told Inner City Press the censorship was due to the limited size of the UN building, when Inner City Press asked an International Parliamentary Union panel on July 19, the answers were different.

Austrian parliamentarian Petra Bayr said that it

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was “crazy” to pre-screen questions. IPU President Saber H. Chowdhury predicted things will get better in the next HLPF. And IPU staff, after its Secretary General Martin Chungong said nine parliaments were asked and three had input, later told Inner City Press that these three were: Indonesia, Luxembourg and Thailand - and, it seems, Togo. We hope to have more on this.

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(censored?)

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