

EU reply to question deriving from the work of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (to be formatted by EUDEL NY)

VMR3 with input from FPI and INTPA as well as DG MARE/EURCA

Summary

The EU underlines its continued commitment to protect and promote human rights, including indigenous peoples' rights and overarching global development objectives. In line with the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) for the 2024 session, the EU has supported a wide range of policy and programmatic initiatives. One example is a project (SAFER) in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and targeted projects in Guatemala and Honduras. Key initiatives, such as the Spotlight Initiative and strategic alignment with the 2030 Agenda, further enhance the EU's systematic approach to indigenous rights within a global sustainable development perspective.

A. Recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and input to the 2024 session

Following the previous update to the Forum, several measures have been set in motion to actualize or draft plans for the enactment of the recommendations delineated by the PFII, chiefly in relation to elevating the rights and well-being of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) across various regions:

1. **SAFER: Strengthening Activism For Environmental Rights.** This program with a budget of 475,000.00 €, emphasizes the protection of collective socio-economic and environmental rights. It focuses on the actions and safety of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) and grassroots Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, advocating for a community-owned approach to natural resources' conservation, regeneration, and management.
2. **Pueblos indígenas ejercen sus derechos individuales y colectivos, para fortalecer la defensa de los derechos humanos y la Democracia.** This Program aims to support the exercise of individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples in accordance with

international rights standards. Specifically, it seeks to foster enhanced respect and realization of cultural, political, social, and economic rights of the Indigenous Communities in Guatemala. This initiative comes with a financial allocation of 440,000.00 €.

3. **Proyecto Raitkinani (Mis Derechos)** allocated a budget of 700,000.00 € and named "Raitkinani (My Rights)" focuses on strengthening the organizations of Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Communities such as the Miskitu, Pech, and Garífuna. The project emphasizes the promotion of human rights and advocates for human rights defenders, collaborating closely with territorial councils, community councils, educational centers, networks, and territorial tables.

The EU-funded Arctic Youth Dialogues initiative aims to promote and encourage Arctic and European youth participation in Arctic policy matters, including indigenous youth.

The EU has invested 2.3 MEUR in this initiative, aligned with the 2021 EU's Arctic Policy and Youth Action Plan.

On 13 October 2021, the EU updated its policy for the Arctic, highlighting the need to support “the inclusive and sustainable development of the Arctic regions to the benefit of its inhabitants and future generations, focusing on the needs of Indigenous Peoples, women and the young, and investing in future-orientated jobs and the blue economy”. The 2021 EU Arctic policy also highlights the strategic importance of the Arctic due to climate change, raw materials, and geostrategic influence.

The EU's Youth Action Plan (2022-2027) aims for a meaningful partnership with youth, especially indigenous, aligning with the 2024 PFII session's theme of empowering youth in decision-making. Initiatives like WYDE (Women and Youth Democracy Initiative), Youth Empowerment Fund, and the Africa-Europe Youth Academy show the EU's dedication to enhancing youth involvement in various discourses. The focus is on reducing inequalities, advancing education, and bolstering youth leadership, resonating with Indigenous Peoples' rights and Indigenous Youth's voice. Key points include a structural partnership with the young, sustainable development, equality, peace, and consultations with youth and women organizations for the Plan's design. Special attention is given to young people in fragile and conflict-affected areas.

B. System-Wide Action Plan to achieve the ends of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The above-mentioned initiatives unite with the main objective of the System-Wide Action Plan adopted in November 2015, which aims for a coherent approach towards realizing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. For instance, the EU's political commitment to women's and indigenous rights issues, as highlighted in the High-Level Panel on Indigenous Women and Climate Change, reflects a holistic approach to tackling political, civic, and gender-related discrimination against indigenous peoples. The engagements such as the Arctic Youth Dialogues and projects in Guatemala, Honduras, Sri Lanka are emblematic of the concerted efforts to ensure that the rights, voices, and participations of indigenous peoples are integrally incorporated in the broader discourse and actions concerning environmental sustainability, human rights, and democratic governance.

C. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the EU has accelerated its efforts through specific initiatives. The Spotlight Initiative adopted a human rights based approach, especially emphasizing gender equality and rights of indigenous peoples. The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024) addresses discrimination against indigenous communities while the EU Gender Action Plan III (2021-2025) emphasizes Gender Equality and empowerment.

At a local level, the EU Delegation in Argentina supports grassroots women's groups fighting for socio-environmental justice. The EU's forthcoming Sustainable Corporate Governance Proposal promotes corporate responsibility in the supply chain. The ProtectDefenders.eu Initiative has supported 11,598 land and environmental rights and indigenous rights' defenders, half of them being women.