

Dear Colleagues,

We refer to the letter of 7 October 2024 inviting UNAIDS to submit information of actions undertaken or planned by our organization regarding Indigenous Peoples' issues.

Through comprehensive initiatives, UNAIDS actively ensures that the rights and health needs of Indigenous peoples are central to its HIV response efforts. We remain committed to promoting intercultural sensitivity and inclusivity in all health planning and delivery, addressing the root causes of the disparities faced by Indigenous communities.

UNAIDS is dedicated to addressing the significant disparities in HIV prevalence among Indigenous peoples particularly in Latin America, where rates can be up to six times higher than national averages. This alarming situation arises from systemic challenges, particularly the lack of decentralized, differentiated, and interculturally sensitive health approaches tailored to the specific needs of Indigenous communities.

To combat these inequalities, UNAIDS with support from various partners, launched an Indigenous-led Coalition on HIV in Latin America. This Coalition promotes a regionally coordinated approach, emphasizing the design and implementation of culturally appropriate strategies to tackle HIV within Indigenous populations. The Coalition does so through active participation in regional technical cooperation platforms involving national HIV programmes as well as through tailored advocacy and service provision efforts within countries focusing on generating better quality data as well as promoting access to and adherence to ARV treatment in the context of traditional medicine.

Please find a list of publications, projects, reports and activities relevant to the 2025 PFI theme "Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples within United Nations Member States and the United Nations system, including identifying good practices and addressing challenges" as well as background information enclosed in the annex.

UNAIDS looks forward to contributing to discussions at the upcoming session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and welcomes collaboration with stakeholders to advance the health and rights of Indigenous peoples.

Sincerely,

Emma

Emma Fowlds  
Executive Office  
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## Annex

1. **Case Studies and Advocacy in Peru ([link](#)):** In partnership with the Awajun-Wampis peoples, UNAIDS has systematized available evidence to advocate for justice, equity right to health, and right to life with national authorities. This advocacy successfully led the Ministry of Health to declare a State of Emergency regarding the HIV epidemic in the Condorcanqui, a region of Peru. Qualitative studies conducted in this area have highlighted the necessity of strengthening intercultural dialogues and involving Indigenous communities in all health decision-making processes.
2. **Engagement in Chile:** Recently, UNAIDS met with the Mayor of the Rapa Nui Indigenous community to sign the Paris Agreement, establishing commitments to address the growing HIV epidemic. This agreement underscores the importance of collaboration between local governments and international organizations in creating effective HIV response strategies that address both prevention and treatment.
3. **Legislative Efforts ([link](#)):** UNAIDS Brazil plays a crucial role in legislative advocacy. The organization produces a weekly Legislative Bulletin that surveys projects currently under consideration in the Brazilian National Congress, focusing on HIV/AIDS, other STIs, and key populations, particularly Indigenous peoples. This initiative aims to provide visibility to these critical issues, assist civil society advocacy, and enable closer monitoring of parliamentary actions, thereby strengthening the agenda for the care and rights of people living with HIV.
4. **Educational Initiatives ([link](#)):** In collaboration with UNESCO, UNAIDS has developed handbooks to promote STI prevention among Indigenous peoples. Launched in 2023, these handbooks for the Warao and Eñepá peoples focus on preventing COVID-19 and STIs. Titles such as "Kratyä Patyätyö" (To Protect the Community) and "Warao a Obonobuna Yakera Abakitane ja' a Nobara Ekida Jakitane" (A Benefit for All) are available in multiple languages, promoting health education and well-being among Indigenous populations. These handbooks form part of the "Health Education and Well-being for Indigenous Populations" series, designed to support health and education professionals in Indigenous schools and community contexts. They facilitate an intercultural dialogue between traditional medicine and non-Indigenous health knowledge, enhancing the integration of healthcare within traditional contexts.
5. **The Àwúre Project ([link](#)),** a collaboration by the Labor Public Prosecutor's Office (MPT), ILO and UNICEF, promotes respect for the identity and diversity of traditional communities, including indigenous peoples, quilombolas, and practitioners of African-based religions, to

combat discrimination and racism. Since 2021, UNAIDS has been implementing the Àwúre Educa platform, an online resource for education on Ethnic-Racial Relations, human rights, and labor relations. The platform offers courses and seminars to empower communities, combat prejudice, and build employability skills.

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### **Background Information**

Wherever epidemiological data exists on HIV and Indigenous peoples in Latin America, prevalence rates are up to six times higher than the national averages. The root causes contributing to these concerning outcomes are the lack of decentralized, differentiated, and interculturally sensitive health approaches adapted to the culturally specific needs of Indigenous communities.

To support addressing these inequalities, UNAIDS with the support of other partners facilitated the launch of an Indigenous-led Coalition on HIV in Latin America whose goal is to promote a regionally coordinated approach to the design and implementation of interculturally appropriate approaches to addressing HIV in Indigenous communities throughout the region. The Coalition does so through active participation in regional technical cooperation platforms involving national HIV programs, as well as through tailored advocacy and service provision efforts within countries focusing on generating better quality data as well as promoting access to and adherence to ARV treatment in the context of traditional medicine.

In Peru, is UNAIDS' work with the Awajun-Wampis peoples to systematize the available evidence and use it in advocacy actions with national authorities, which resulted in the Ministry of Health declaring a State of Emergency around the HIV epidemic in the department of Condorcanqui. Further qualitative studies were conducted, which have outlined the need to strengthen the quality of intercultural dialogues and to involve Indigenous communities in all aspects of health decision making in these areas.

In Chile, UNAIDS recently met with the Mayor of the Rapa Nui Indigenous community to sign the Paris Agreement, marking the establishment of key commitments by the community to address the growing HIV epidemic. The agreement underscores collaboration between local governments and international organizations to create more effective HIV response strategies, addressing both prevention and treatment.

### **UNESCO and UNAIDS: Handbook on STI Prevention for Indigenous Peoples ([link](#))**

The initiative by UNESCO and UNAIDS to translate best practices for HIV prevention for indigenous peoples began in 2015. Recently, in 2023, UNESCO in Brazil and UNAIDS launched two handbooks for the Warao and Eñepá peoples, focusing on COVID-19 and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) prevention.

The handbook "Kratyä Patyätyö" (To Protect the Community) is available in Eñepa, Portuguese, and Spanish, while "Warao a Obonobuna Yakera Abakitane ja' a Nobara Ekida Jakitane" (A Benefit for All) is in Warao, Portuguese, and Spanish. These resources aim to promote health education and well-being among indigenous populations in preventing STIs/HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis.

The handbooks are part of the series "Health Education and Well-being for Indigenous Populations," a multilingual and intercultural educational material designed to support health and education professionals in preventing COVID-19 and STIs in indigenous schools and community contexts. The intercultural dialogue between traditional medicine practices and non-indigenous health knowledge serves to better integrate healthcare within traditional contexts.

### **Training of DSEI - Special Indigenous Health Districts ([link](#))**

In partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNAIDS Brazil, the 1st Workshop on Surveillance and Promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Indigenous Health was held in 2024 to enhance access to sexual and reproductive health for indigenous peoples. The workshop was designed as ongoing training for health professionals to ensure dignified and culturally appropriate care for over 300 indigenous ethnic groups in the country. It acknowledges the ongoing challenges in responding to HIV, particularly due to geographical barriers. Over three days, professionals from the 34 DSEIs (Special Indigenous Health Districts) shared experiences, discussed the promotion of sexual and reproductive rights, and participated in data qualification for the surveillance of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The meeting aimed to strengthen the network of professionals and foster positive integration that could directly impact the territories.

### **Àwúre Educa ([link](#))**

The Àwúre Project is a joint initiative by the Labor Public Prosecutor's Office (MPT), the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Its aim is to promote respect for the identity, diversity, and pluralism of traditional communities, including indigenous peoples, black communities, quilombolas, riverside dwellers, residents of peripheral communities, and practitioners of African-based religions, to combat discrimination, intolerance, violence, and racism.

UNAIDS is one of the implementers of the Àwúre Educa platform, established in 2021 as an online education platform for training, capacity building, and professional learning. The goal is to strengthen education on Ethnic-Racial Relations and human rights as a means of preventing and addressing prejudice, racism, and all forms of discrimination. The platform also develops skills for the populations served to enhance their employability.

The courses, training sessions, seminars, and webinars focus on three fundamental themes: Human Rights, Ethnic-Racial Relations, and Labor Relations and Employability, which are crucial for empowering citizenship.

### **Legislative Bulletin**

UNAIDS Brazil produces a weekly survey of legislative projects currently under consideration in the Brazilian National Congress. The monitored topics include HIV/AIDS, other STIs, and key and priority populations, particularly indigenous peoples.

The purpose of this activity is to provide visibility to information, assist civil society advocacy, and enable closer monitoring of the work being done by federal parliamentarians, aiming to strengthen the agenda for the care and rights of people living with HIV.

### **OHCHR – Scholarship Program for Indigenous and Quilombola Peoples 2024**

The Scholarship Program for Indigenous and Quilombola Peoples was created in 1997 by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) during the International Decade of Indigenous Peoples. The program aims to give Indigenous and Quilombola Peoples the opportunity to learn about the work of UN institutions and mechanisms that address human rights and issues specific to Indigenous Peoples. Participants who complete the program will be better equipped to help their organizations and communities protect and promote their rights.

UNAIDS Brazil conducted a training workshop on human rights and political advocacy for the new scholars in 2024.

### **AMAZONAIDS: At the Frontline of the Epidemic ([link](#))**

Considered one of the first strategies for responding to HIV in the Amazon, the UN's Integrated Plan to support the AIDS epidemic response in the Amazon aims to align the region with the broader containment of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Brazil.

In 2017, UNAIDS launched a series of reports and articles about the project's actions. The UNAIDS-Eder Content partnership also resulted in a web documentary of about 20 minutes, telling the story of AMAZONAIDS through the experiences of Maria Paula, a transgender woman from Peru who crossed the border to seek antiretroviral treatment in Tabatinga (AM). The film goes beyond specific health issues to address significant themes for the HIV response in the region, such as violence against women and human rights, especially for LGBTI+ population.

AMAZONAIDS's work in the Alto Solimões region was also strategic in providing access to information about health, human rights, and prevention of HIV and other STIs to the largest indigenous population concentration in the Amazon.