

## Questionnaire to UN system

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### **Questionnaire to the UN system agencies, funds and programmes and intergovernmental organizations**

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) was established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 2000/22. The Permanent Forum is mandated to provide expert advice and recommendations on Indigenous issues to the ECOSOC and through the Council to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes; to raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities related to Indigenous issues within the UN system; prepare and disseminate information on Indigenous issues; and promote respect for and full application of the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and follow up the effectiveness of the Declaration.

The Indigenous Peoples Development Branch/Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues invites UN system agencies, funds and programmes and other inter-governmental organizations to complete the attached questionnaire on any action taken or planned in response to the Permanent Forum's recommendations, the system-wide action plan on rights of indigenous peoples (SWAP) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The responses will be compiled into a report for the 2024 session of the Permanent Forum. In your responses, please, include information on progress and challenges related to Indigenous women, Indigenous persons with disabilities, Indigenous older persons, and Indigenous children and youth.

All responses will be placed on the DESA/DISD website on Indigenous Peoples at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/>

*Please note that the term “Indigenous Peoples” must be capitalized as per the UN Editorial Manual.*

*If you have any objections to your response being made available on our website, please inform our office accordingly.*

Please submit your completed questionnaire by **15 November 2023** to:

Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch  
Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
Division for Inclusive Social Development  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
United Nations Headquarters  
New York, USA 10017  
Email: [indigenous\\_un@un.org](mailto:indigenous_un@un.org)

Subject: Response to SWAP questionnaire

## Questionnaire

Please also include an **executive summary** of your inputs to the 3 main questions above (strict 500-word limit) which will be used for our compilation report submitted to the 2024 session of the PFII.

**Please provide information on the following:**

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

- i. Please provide information on measures taken since your last update to the Forum on the implementation or planned implementation of the recommendations of the PFII.

*As in previous years and as part of the efforts to contribute to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032), ITU organized one session and participated in other two at the WSIS Forum 2023 to strengthen capacity building for Indigenous People:*

#### **1. Session organized by ITU: Capacity Building and Enabling Environments for Meaningful Access in Indigenous and Rural Communities.**

*The objective of this space is to dialogue around the impact that are obtained through the realization of capacity building programs aimed at enabling people living in rural territories or indigenous communities to install, operate and manage their own local solutions for access to telecommunications services and local ICTs entrepreneurship. Two training strategies for Indigenous and rural communities were presented during the session: ITU's Blended Training Program for ICT Network Managers in Indigenous and Rural Communities in Latin America, and APC and Rhizomatica's National Community Network Schools. During the discussion, in which around 60 participants took part, the importance of consolidating processes to generate communication and meaningful access projects based on the creation of capacities in people from the communities for network management and content creation was discussed.<sup>1</sup>*

#### **2. First session in which ITU participated and contributed with speaker presentation: The UK support to digital development in developing and emerging countries.**

*This session was organized by the Digital Access Programme (DAP) of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. The intention of this space for dialogue, in which around 70 representatives of diverse stakeholders participated, was to present the different strategies that the UK is supporting to promote meaningful and universal access in Indigenous, rural, and marginalized communities in five countries: Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Brazil and Indonesia. Carlos Baca's presentation was a reflection on the development of the National Schools of Community Networks (NSCNs)*

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<sup>1</sup> The recording of the session is available at: <https://play.itu.int/event/wsis-forum-2023-capacity-building-and-enabling-environments-for-meaningful-access-in-indigenous-and-rural-communities/>

*and the background they have in relation to the training program developed by the ITU in LAC. The session addressed elements such as access to spectrum and licenses, digital literacy and capacity building.<sup>2</sup>*

**3. *Second session in which ITU participated and contributed with speaker presentation: Closing the digital divide-how capacity building can help communities build sustainable Internet Infrastructure.***

*This last session was organized by the Internet Society and presented training programs related to the deployment and maintenance of telecommunications infrastructure in rural and Indigenous communities on five continents. In this space, in which just over 30 people participated, reflection was made on the lessons learned in the development of the ITU's blended Training Programme for Managers in ICT Networks in Indigenous and Rural Communities in Latin America. The main focus of the presentation, and of the session in general, was to reflect on how these capacity-building initiatives have been the product of a long-term participatory and collaborative process to generate training programs related to the ways of life and communication needs of indigenous and rural communities, where the role of international organizations, civil society organizations and international cooperation is key to the development and consolidation of projects in the future.*

- ii. The theme of the 2024 PFII session is “Enhancing Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination in the context of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – emphasizing the voice of Indigenous Youth. Please include information on any publications, projects, reports, or activities relevant to this theme.

*As a follow-up to these recommendations, the Regional Office for the Americas and ITU-D launched a pilot capacity building program aimed at young people from indigenous and rural communities living in the Gran Chaco Americano in Bolivia, Argentina and Paraguay.*

*The main objective of this project, implemented in collaboration with the Fundación Gran Chaco, is to promote ICT capacity building activities (digital and soft skills) for the benefit of young people in local communities in line with the needs of the ICT labor market/ecosystem, and to support the countries with the development of national strategies to develop the digital skills of young people and build an enabling environment for innovation and entrepreneurship.*

- iii. Please provide information on efforts to ensure the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the international decades declared by the General Assembly, such as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development,” the International Decade of Indigenous Languages and other relevant international decades and processes, including CEDAW General recommendation 39 on Indigenous women and girls.

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<sup>2</sup> The recording of the session is available at: <https://play.itu.int/event/wsis-forum-2023-the-uk-support-to-digital-development-in-developing-and-emerging-countries/>

**See i) above**

*The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum co-organised annually by ITU, UNESCO, UNCTAD, and UNDP, in collaboration with more than 30 UN agencies provides a multistakeholder platform for information exchange, knowledge creation, and sharing of best practices on information and communication technologies (ICTs) and fostering partnerships.*

*Through the WSIS Forum activities, we promote the participation of Indigenous peoples in the international decades declared by the General Assembly and other relevant international decades and processes.*

iv. Has your entity responded to the 2022 UNPFII recommendation<sup>3</sup> paragraph 85... *The Permanent Forum urges all United Nations entities and States parties to treaties concerning the environment, biodiversity and the climate to eliminate the use of the term “local communities” in conjunction with indigenous peoples, so that the term “indigenous peoples and local communities” would be abolished.*

If yes, please explain your response in further detail.

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

#### **Background**

As per the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/69/2), a [system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) was adopted in November 2015 and launched by the Secretary-General at the UN Permanent Forum in May 2016.

In August 2020, the United Nations Executive Committee agreed on the need for accelerated and collective action to strengthen the implementation of the SWAP on indigenous peoples. In November 2020, the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination issued a [Call to Action: Building an Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient Future with Indigenous Peoples](#). Its goal is to ensure collaborative and coherent UN system action to support the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples with a focus on furthering the implementation of the SWAP<sup>4</sup>.

i. The Permanent Forum will follow up on progress made on the SWAP implementation as part of its discussion on the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples during its 2024 session. Please provide an analysis of actions taken by your agency, fund

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<sup>3</sup> E/2022/43-E/C.19/2022/11

<sup>4</sup> Reporting on the activities to implement the CEB Call to Action is through task groups and should not be included in the responses to this questionnaire.

and/or programme on the six key elements of the SWAP, since your last update to the Forum<sup>5</sup>.

### C. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

i. Please describe any activities your entity has organized since the last reporting period to accelerate progress across a range of SDGs, demonstrating the interlinkages across goals and targets and if applicable, providing examples of translating global goals into local actions. In your response, please consider referring to SDGs relevant to the theme of the 2024 session of the Forum.

ii. Please describe any activities your entity organized in support of the 2023 UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and SDG Summit and/or reports and activities that supported SDG reporting and monitoring or a VNR process at the national, regional, or global level.

**Reminder:** Please also include an executive summary of your inputs to the 3 main questions above (strict 500-word limit) which will be used for our compilation report submitted to the 2024 session of the PFII.

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Meaningful access for unconnected rural and indigenous communities isn't just about digital literacy, coverage, or device distribution. This work requires the design of strategies and projects in which the remote and indigenous communities are directly involved in the management, maintenance and sustainability of these ICT networks and projects.*

*Therefore, ITU's work with and for indigenous peoples and communities have evolved into a comprehensive capacity-building program. This program emphasizes educational and socio-economic empowerment through entrepreneurship and digital inclusion processes, spearheaded by indigenous leaders and communicators, with a special focus on women and the youth.*

*Thus, in line with resolutions 11 and 46 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (Rev. Kigali, 2022), two processes have been continued in the Americas region in 2023 for capacity building and the development of digital entrepreneurship among young people and people from indigenous and rural communities.*

*In 2023, the fourth edition of the Training Programme for Managers in ICT Networks for Indigenous and Rural Communities in Latin America took place. This program has seen over 80 community ICT network managers graduate, each making a direct positive influence in their regions by initiating or enhancing community communication and connectivity endeavours. Given the significant success of this program, efforts are now*

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<sup>5</sup> The six key elements of the SWAP are: 1) Raise awareness of the UNDRIP; 2) Support the implementation of the UNDRIP, particularly at the country level; 3) Support the realization of indigenous peoples' rights in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; 4) Map existing standards and guidelines, capacity, training materials and resources within the UN system, international financial institutions and the members of the IASG for the effective implementation of the UNDRIP; 5) Develop the capacity of States, indigenous peoples, civil society and UN personnel; and 6) Advance the participation of indigenous peoples in UN processes.

*underway to introduce **similar initiatives** in Asia and Africa. This was further acknowledged at the 2023 Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) meeting, where member countries endorsed and supported its replication in Africa.*

*Additionally, since December 2021, there's been an ongoing capacity-building initiative tailored for the young indigenous populace of Gran Chaco Americano, spanning Bolivia, Argentina, and Paraguay. The aim is to foster digital entrepreneurship. Thus far, over 30 workshops focusing on both foundational and advanced ICT skills have been conducted, benefiting around 500 youths. This training is further enriched with a dedicated forum and a comprehensive assessment focused on indigenous youth and their digital entrepreneurial activities.*

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE 2023 PROJECTS**

*In 2023, the ITU renewed its dedication to the principle of "Leave no one behind", persisting with two established programs tailored for the indigenous communities of Latin America. Developed in tandem with organizations deeply rooted in and knowledgeable about the region's indigenous and rural settings, these initiatives are fortified by a genuine understanding of local communication needs and are anchored in the cultural nuances of the territories they serve.*

*Both programs view ICTs as instruments to enhance indigenous community life. Thus, they champion strategies that adapt technology to benefit indigenous-centric digital communication projects. These projects directly address communication necessities, ensure self-sustainability, and fortify the preservation of language and culture. Furthermore, they emphasize inclusivity, ensuring everyone in these regions—irrespective of age, gender, economic standing, educational background, or disability—can access and benefit from them.*

### **Training Programme for Managers in ICT Networks in Indigenous and Rural Communities in Latin America 2023**

*This program prioritizes enhancing the skills of individuals already involved in communication and connectivity projects within Latin American communities. This training programme' approach ensures that the benefits of training will be directly reflected in the participants' home communities. By the close of this year's edition, the program will have over 100 alumni actively spearheading and maintaining digital inclusion and digital accessibility initiatives within their villages and broader regions.*

*The curricular structure is made up of five four-week online courses through ITU-Academy and a 10-day on-site bootcamp as follows:*

- 1. Development of Community ICT Projects.*
- 2. Basics of electricity and solar energy.*
- 3. Telecommunications and community networks.*
- 4. Telecommunications legal framework.*
- 5. Economic sustainability and community engagement.*
- 6. In-person bootcamp with specializations in broadcasting and community networks.*

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*In 2023 this training program was redesigned to update the content and main features, based on the evaluations and experience generated in the three previous editions.*

*During this year's selection process, a total of 756 applications were received, from which a final number of 94 participants were selected for the training program. Of this number, approximately 35 people, 52% of which are women and come from 12 countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Venezuela), are expected to complete the training, including the in-person phase of the program.*

*The training programme and selection process of the participants will be held in a collaboration between ITU and [Redes por la Diversidad, Equidad y Sustentabilidad A.C.](#), [Rhizomatica Communications](#) and the [Association for Progressive Communications](#), in collaboration with the organizations linked to the [Techio Comunitario Training Programme for Indigenous People in Latin America](#).*

*More information about this program can be found at:*

- [General video of the program](#)
- [Video of the last bootcamp](#)
- [ITU Digital Skills Insights article](#)

*NOTE: The 2023 bootcamp was planned to be held in Guatemala. However, due to the current political conditions in that country, it has been decided to postpone it to Q1 2024.*

### **1. Youth Digital Inclusion in the Gran Chaco Americano**

*This project, initiated at the end of 2021, seeks to generate capacities so that young people from rural and indigenous communities living in the Gran Chaco in Bolivia, Argentina and Paraguay can develop their digital entrepreneurship in line with the current ICT labor digital market/ecosystem. For this purpose, the project pursues two primary strategies: providing direct training to the youth in these regions and creating a conducive atmosphere to foster entrepreneurship within the target countries.*

*[Fundación Gran Chaco](#) (FGC) is the organization selected to implement the project. To carry out the workshops, the Fundación has made use of alliances with grassroots organizations and thematic specialists. These organizations include Fundación Nativa in Bolivia; Proyecto Herramientas para la Acción Climática in Paraguay; and Fundación Capital, Banco Nación in Argentina, Chicos.net and the Gender, Society and Policy Area of FLACSO in Argentina.*

*The collaboration of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the FGC is part of a series of actions and strategies for digital inclusion that the Fundación has carried out since 2013 in response to the growing needs for communication and bridging*

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*the digital divide in the communities with which it works. Therefore, although the project arose just two years ago, it is a continuation of long-term processes.*

*As of November 2023, 33 workshops have been held (21 in Argentina, 4 in Bolivia and 8 in Paraguay), from which around 500 young people have graduated. Among the topics and skills addressed in them are:*

- *Financial digital tools*
- *Leadership*
- *Digital document processing*
- *Cell phone and computer use*
- *Crypto art*
- *Business development*
- *Basic digital tools*
- *Digital content production and postproduction*
- *Maintenance and management of community networks*

*Beyond these workshops, we've employed additional strategies to foster a supportive environment for rural and indigenous youths to develop and solidify their digital enterprises. Firstly, a quantitative analysis was conducted to assess the understanding and interests of young individuals in northern Argentina regarding Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Secondly, a Digital Inclusion Seminar for Young People took place in Buenos Aires on October 11 and 12, 2023.*

*Finally, a comprehensive evaluation of the project and its results is being developed, which will lead to a series of recommendations to strengthen the digital inclusion of young people from indigenous and rural communities in the Gran Chaco and other regions of Latin America.*

More information about this project can be found here: <https://gran-chaco.org/proyecto/4324/>

***For more information about ITU work on Indigenous Issues please see:***

*ITU-D website on Indigenous Issues: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Indigenous-Peoples/Pages/default.aspx>*

*ITU-D Focal Point: Roxana WIDMER-ILIESCU [roxana.widmer-iliescu@itu.int](mailto:roxana.widmer-iliescu@itu.int)*

### **ANNEX 1**

#### **Agenda of the twenty-second session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

The Twentieth-second session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is scheduled to take place from **15 to 26 April 2024**

#### **Provisional Agenda**

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.



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3. Discussion on the theme “Enhancing Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination in the context of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: emphasizing the voices of Indigenous youth”.

4. Discussion on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum (economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights), with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

5. Dialogues:

(a) Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples; E/2023/43 E/C.19/2023/7 23-08492 5/24

(b) Dialogue with Member States;

(c) Dialogue with the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes;

(d) Human rights dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; annual review of progress on the implementation of general recommendation No. 39 (2022);

€ Regional dialogues;

(f) Dialogue on Indigenous platforms established within United Nations entities;

(g) Thematic dialogues, including on the financing of Indigenous Peoples’ work and participation in the context of, inter alia, development, climate, environment and biodiversity.

6. Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues considered by the Economic and Social Council, the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and emerging issues.

7. Provisional agenda of the twenty-fourth session of the Permanent Forum.

8. Adoption of the report of the Permanent Forum on its twenty-third session. -