

ECOSOC Management Segment

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Statement by the Chairman on the Report of the 23rd session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim

Distinguished delegates,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues held its 23rd session from 15 to 26 April. I sincerely thank the Member States that participated, especially those that supported the participation of Indigenous Peoples and youth. Thanks to commitments of all actors, we built a strong consensus to enhance the rights of Indigenous Peoples, in a context of multiple crisis that affect the existence of my brothers and sisters.

I am very pleased to present the report of the Permanent Forum contained in document E/2024/43.

The special theme of the session was “Enhancing Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination in the context of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: emphasizing the voices of Indigenous youth”. Other topics discussed covered the six mandated areas of the Forum and its future work, as well as dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

While climate change and biodiversity loss are progressing everywhere, and as the geopolitical tensions deeply affect the implementation of the SDGs. We need stronger actions and we need to act all together.

The report of the Forum ask Member States to redouble efforts to fully realize the right of self-determination of Indigenous Peoples by ensuring that they remain at the center of all decision-making processes that affect their Peoples, their lands, territories, and resources. We acknowledge the key role of Indigenous youth as champions for self-determination.

The Forum also noted that culturally appropriate targeted measures are needed to tackle the disproportionately high rates of suicide, poverty, and incarceration experience by Indigenous Peoples, in particular by Indigenous youth. We also stressed the urgent need for Member States to increase their commitment to the health of Indigenous women.

Furthermore, the Forum is alarmed by the continuation of violations against Indigenous leaders and the continuing exploitation of the lands and territories of Indigenous Peoples due to extractive activities for critical minerals. We command member states engaged in the “clean energy transition”. However, we also need to recall that such projects often by-pass the right to free prior and informed consent, ending in the loss, militarization and pollution of Indigenous Peoples’ lands, territories, and resources. Indigenous leaders and human rights defenders opposing such initiatives become targets of **reprisals**, with Indigenous women at the highest risk of gender-based violence. No one should be threatened or even killed for protecting mother earth. We are all her sons and daughters.

Distinguished delegates,

Over the last decade, the world has recognized the leadership of Indigenous Peoples in ecosystem protection. Our knowledge and projects make a big difference in our common battle against climate change. But only a small fraction of funding is directed to Indigenous Peoples.

We urged Member States to enhance direct financial support for Indigenous Peoples-led projects with funding mechanisms that are equitable, accessible, flexible and aligned with Indigenous Peoples' priorities. We recalled that COP16 on biodiversity, COP16 on desertification, and COP 29 on climate change will all focus on finance offering an opportunity to progress on direct access funding for Indigenous Peoples.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Looking ahead to next year, you have before you a provisional agenda draft where the Permanent Forum identified the theme "Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples within UN Member States and the UN system, including identifying good practices and addressing challenges". The time is right to have a closer look at progress that has been made, as well as unresolved issues in implementing the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Permanent Forum also proposed the organization of an International Expert Group meeting on the theme "The rights of Indigenous Peoples, including those in voluntary isolation and initial contact in the context of the extraction of critical minerals" to inform its next session. Around 200 groups of Indigenous Peoples currently live in voluntary isolation and initial contact. Their survival depends on the health of their environment.

Our forum looks forward to working with you to ensure that Indigenous Peoples participate meaningfully and contributes to the work of your **Functional** Commissions and expert bodies. We are here to support each other in this space to transform our lives in a better way.

Distinguished delegates, I remain at your disposal to answer any questions and appreciate your time and consideration. **THANK YOU!**