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 2025 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.[1]

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

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 2024** 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

Subject: Response to SWAP questionnaire

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[1] Indigenous should be capitalized when referring to cultures, communities, lands, languages, etc., of Indigenous Peoples, e.g.: Indigenous culture in Ecuador, Indigenous languages are dying out. If referring to flora or fauna, lower case should be used. See UN Editorial Manual for further guidance: https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/editorial-manual/updates

Please provide information on the following:

A. Recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and input to the 2025 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 part of its ongoing efforts to support the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032), ITU organized and participated in several sessions at the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event to advance capacity-building for indigenous peoples. These sessions included:

1. ***Building an Enabling Environment for Indigenous, Rural, and Remote Connectivity*** *This session was a collaborative effort between the Association for Progressive Communications, Rhizomatica, and ITU. It explored ITU's work and blended tailored trainings to best respond to the technology-related needs of Indigenous Peoples needs, with a focus on socio-economic development and community self-sustainability. It also showcased support for indigenous-led technological projects, presenting the experiences of indigenous communicators and networks and action taken by policymakers, regulators and other stakeholders., The discussion addressed the challenges of affordable connectivity and use of ICTs and examined the roles of both government and non-government actors. Participants also reflected on emerging technologies and challenges faced by indigenous and rural communities in the context of increased digitalisation, keeping in mind the upcoming 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20), taking place in July 2025.*

2. ***Towards Inclusive Digital Innovation Ecosystems - Do's and Don'ts, and What's Next?*** *ITU also contributed with expertise and shared experience in this session, organized by IT for Change. As we approach the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20), the session emphasized the urgent need for effective digital governance in light of disparities in technological and institutional capabilities. The ITU expert's participation underscored the importance of evaluating global and national governance frameworks, particularly in relation to their impact on indigenous and rural communities. These communities often face disproportionate barriers to access and use technology, and thus are not included in the digital ecosystem. ITU further discussed the present and future consequences of this digital gap. Key recommendations included strengthening partnerships to develop inclusive policies and fostering dialogue among stakeholders to address emerging challenges in the digital landscape by rural and remote communities and Indigenous People.*

3. ***How Can We Ensure the Internet Delivers for Everyone in Twenty Years?*** *Organized by the UK Internet Governance Forum Steering Committee, this session examined what a truly inclusive Internet would look like, in alignment with the vision of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the Sustainable Development Goals*

(SDGs). The ITU expert on Indigenous Peoples presented from ITU's perspective of over 20 years of work experience in supporting the digital inclusion of Indigenous Peoples. The key requirement is to increase tailored capacity-building to ensure that, beyond basic connectivity and Internet access, these communities can meaningfully use ICT products and services and thus be active participants in the digital society. To support indigenous communities in using technology effectively within their local contexts, capacity building must go beyond internet access, aligning with communities' knowledge-sharing practices. Affordability, device access, and relevant content are also essential enablers.

ii. The theme of the 2025 PFII session is "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." Please include information on any publications, projects, reports, or activities relevant to this theme.

Looking ahead to the 2025 PFII session, themed "Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," ITU's initiatives are highly relevant. The organization is dedicated to enhancing access to and use of ICTs by Indigenous Peoples, as well as by those in rural and remote communities. This commitment is particularly reflected in the 2024 capacity-building training initiatives, which are specifically targeted to meet the needs of these communities.

The fourth edition of instructor led online and in person (blended) Training Program for ICT Network Managers in Latin America *has been successfully developed. Twenty-eight participants from nine countries have graduated after a year-long training encompassing holistic knowledge, gaining the necessary skills to plan, develop, implement and maintain their own connectivity-related projects. These participants, as graduates of this professional training, are also leaders in communication and telecommunications within Indigenous and rural communities. Participants brought their own valuable experience to the program while strengthening their technical, organizational, legal, and sustainability skills in ICT-related projects. Since one manager is able to serve several Indigenous communities, the potential impact of this training is high. The training has directly benefited thousands of people across nine countries, who improved their connectivity projects and provided better ICT related products, relevant content, and services to local communities.*

*Additionally, in 2024 ITU launched a new online training course in Spanish, on "**Designing Community Connectivity Strategies in Indigenous and Rural Territories in Latin America**". This five-week tutor-led course is designed to equip participants with the skills to develop effective connectivity and usability strategies for Indigenous and rural communities. It covers the social, technical, organizational, and economic aspects essential to community-driven connectivity solutions, while also strengthening local identity and livelihoods. Approximately 70 participants have graduated from the first edition of this course.*

*Building on the success of these training initiatives in the Americas region, and in line with the mandate of the ITU Members requests made during the last Telecommunications Development Advisory Group (TDAG in 2023 and 2024), the **ICT Network Managers Training Program will be expanded to two additional regions. In 2024,** ITU worked to adapt the content and methodology of the program in preparation for a launch in **Sub-Saharan Africa in English in 2025. ITU further plan to localise and expand this training for the Asia and Pacific region.***

*These efforts and the impactful results achieved are made possible **through joint and close***

collaboration with organizations with strong expertise working with Indigenous Communities such as the Association for Progressive Communications, Rhizomatica, Redes AC, and the Internet Society.

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 (2021-2030), the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development" (2018-2028), the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022 - 2032) and other relevant international decades and processes, including CEDAW General recommendation 39 on Indigenous women and girls.

See i) above

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum, co-organized annually by ITU, UNESCO, UNCTAD, and UNDP in partnership with over 30 UN agencies, provides a dynamic multistakeholder platform for exchanging information, generating knowledge, and sharing best practices related to information and communication technologies (ICTs). It also plays a key role in fostering global collaboration. Through its activities at the WSIS Forum, ITU actively promotes the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the international decades declared by the General Assembly, as well as other major global initiatives.

iv. Has your entity responded to the 2022 UNPFII recommendation[2] 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.
ITU-D has considered the 2022 UNPFII recommendation in our work supporting Indigenous Peoples. While ITU can reflect this distinction in our reports, any changes in terminology to resolutions or documents must be addressed by ITU's membership. We encourage organizations working on Indigenous issues to raise such proposals at the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) 2025 and the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 for further discussion, particularly on topics related to the environment, biodiversity, and climate as required by the UNPFII recommendation.

*However, it is important to note that **ITU's work for Indigenous pPeoples focuses on the perspective of digital inclusion for all people**, ensuring no one is left behind in the digital age, regardless of age, gender, ability, or geographical location.*

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

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[2] E/2022/43-E/C.19/2022/11

Questionnaire to UN system

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[3].

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 2025 session. Please provide an analysis of actions taken by your agency, fund and/or programme on the six key elements of the SWAP, since your last update to the Forum[4].

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 2025 session of the Forum, including SDGs 5, 7, 10, 13 and 16.

ii. Please describe any activities your entity organized in support of the 2024 UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 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 2025 session of the PFII.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Meaningful access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) in rural and remote communities, as well as for Indigenous Peoples, requires more than digital literacy, affordable internet connectivity, or access to ICT devices, products, and services. It demands strategies in which Indigenous Peoples lead and sustain their own ICT networks.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is committed to advancing digital inclusion for Indigenous Peoples, ensuring they thrive in the digital age while preserving their cultural heritage and fostering greater self-sustainability for enhanced socio-economic development. In 2024, the ITU continues its commitment to advancing digital inclusion for Indigenous Peoples, in line with the mandates of Resolutions 11 and 46 from the World Telecommunication Development Conference (Rev. Kigali, 2022).
ITU continues to raise awareness, share expertise, and develop ICT training programs tailored to the unique needs and aspirations of Indigenous communities. ITU also has been working to expand its capacity-building programs, with a focus on adapting the Latin American curriculum for Sub-Saharan Africa and looking ahead, in the Asia-Pacific region.
These initiatives aim to strengthen ICT management skills, promote digital entrepreneurship, and enhance self-sustainability, while also supporting the preservation of cultural heritage through the creation and maintenance of Indigenous Networks. This work also contributes to the broader objectives of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032).

Key partnerships with organizations such as the Association for Progressive Communications

*(APC), Rhizomatica, and Redes AC have played a crucial role in strengthening these efforts. Notably, during 2024, the ITU has completed **the fourth edition of the Blended Training Programme for ICT Network Managers in Latin America**, empowering local leaders to design and implement community-driven connectivity projects. Additionally, a **new online course on "Designing Community Connectivity Strategies in Indigenous and Rural Territories" was launched to foster knowledge-sharing.***

*__At the WSIS+20 Forum__ High-Level Event, the ITU showcased its ongoing work with Indigenous communities through a dedicated session focused on "Building an Enabling Environment for Indigenous, Rural, and Remote Connectivity" addressing the challenges of affordable connectivity, and use of ICTs **highlighting the roles of both government and non-government actors to jointly advance this agenda.***

*The ITU also **contributed expertise to other relevant sessions**, highlighting the importance of aligning capacity-building efforts with local knowledge and practices, supporting Indigenous-led technological initiatives, and encouraging policymakers to ensure equitable and meaningful connectivity.*

*Through these efforts, the **ITU is also contributing to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, showcasing ICT-driven solutions for meaningful connectivity and empowerment through access to, knowledge of, and the effective use of technology.***

For more information visit ITU's dedicated webpage on digital inclusion for Indigenous Communities: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Indigenous-Peoples/Pages/default.aspx

(435 words)

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[3] 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. 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.

Questionnaire to UN system

ANNEX 1

Agenda of the twenty-fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The Twentieth-fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is scheduled to take place from **21 April – 2 May 2025.**

Provisional Agenda

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

3. Discussion on the 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".

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;

(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);

(e) Interregional, intergenerational and global dialogue;

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

(g) Thematic dialogue on the financing of Indigenous Peoples' work and participation across the multilateral and regional system.

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-fifth session of the Permanent Forum.

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

session.