

PAHO



Pan American
Health
Organization



World Health
Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE
Americas



Contributions to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

**From the Pan American Health
Organization (PAHO/WHO)**

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 intergovernmental 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

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 a follow up to the UNPF Recommendations, PAHO has continued strengthening its efforts on the advancement of Indigenous maternal health. This includes implementing the application of the tool for promoting culturally safe childbirth in the region of the Americas. PAHO continues conducting extensive work in the field of maternal health, promoting an intercultural approach.

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.

PAHO continues to prioritize the health needs of Indigenous youth in the region through their effective participation. Relevant activities have taken place in 2023, including capacity building activities to the Indigenous Youth Network for the region of the Americas, with a focus on the [Knowledge Dialogues methodology](#). Also, PAHO’s technical teams work with Indigenous youth in the region to implement the [Health Plan for Indigenous youth in Latin America and the Caribbean](#). This plan was elaborated in 2017 by the Indigenous Youth Network for the region of the Americas with PAHO’s technical support:

PAHO trained Indigenous young leaders in the region on the Knowledge Dialogues methodology and subsequently trained some leaders as facilitators of knowledge dialogues. PAHO promoted exchanges of experience among countries to address challenges and opportunities to implement knowledge dialogues in health topics.

PAHO also included Indigenous Youth perspectives during the Global Workshop on Biodiversity, Traditional Knowledge, Health, and Well-being, which took place in July in Brazil.

In September, PAHO co-organized with FAO an event to promote intercultural dialogues with a focus on Indigenous Youth. During the event, Indigenous Youth from the LAC region had the opportunity to discuss some of their priority topics, including nutrition and climate change.

Approaches were defined to be presented during the Global Youth Forum organized by FAO in October. Indigenous Youth from the Americas highlighted the importance of positioning intercultural dialogues and requested the organization of a side event during the Global Forum. The event was co-organized by PAHO:

[OPS divulga metodología de diálogos de saberes en el II Foro Global de las Naciones Unidas de la Juventud Indígena 2023 - OPS/OMS | Organización Panamericana de la Salud \(paho.org\)](#)

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.

PAHO’s policy on Ethnicity and Health (2017) includes social participation and strategic partnerships as one of its strategic lines of action. This area of intervention seeks to promote effective participation, joint efforts, commitment, and strategic partnerships among health authorities, other state institutions, local organizations, and the general population to foster action to increase inclusion, equity and equality. The policy urges PAHO’s Member States, as appropriate, to increase, promote and ensure the social participation of all Indigenous Peoples, as well as other groups in the development and implementation of health policies, considering gender differences and life course perspective. PAHO staff promote the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in any activity related to their health and wellbeing.

iv. Has your entity responded to the 2022 UNPFII recommendation¹ 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.

¹ E/2022/43-E/C.19/2022/11

Questionnaire to UN system

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 SWAP².

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 and/or programme on the six key elements of the SWAP, since your last update to the Forum³.

PAHO/WHO conducted several activities to implement the SWAP to achieve the ends of the UNDRIP, as summarized below.

The approval of the first Policy on Ethnicity and Health by PAHO Member States during the 29th Pan American Sanitary Conference is a critical contribution for achieving the UNDRIP goals. This Policy constitutes a framework for Member States to address the health of Indigenous Peoples through five lines of action: 1) production of evidence; 2) promotion of policy action; 3) social participation and strategic partnerships; 4) recognition of ancestral knowledge and traditional and complementary medicine; and, 5) capacity development at all levels. UNDRIP is referred to and highlighted in the Policy on Ethnicity and Health. It is also available on the Cultural Diversity and Health website and promoted via regional PAHO/WHO social media accounts on relevant advocacy days recognized by PAHO.

In 2019, the Strategy and Plan of Action on Ethnicity and Health (2019-2025), aligned with the UNDRIP, was approved by PAHO Member States. This is another critical contribution for achieving the goals of the UNDRIP in the Americas. The process of developing the Strategy included a large consultation process with Indigenous Peoples and other groups at country, sub-regional and regional levels. In 2023, a mid-progress report was presented to Member States, which summarizes advances made by countries, towards the indicators of the Strategy and Plan of Action on Ethnicity and Health.

The lack of advances in the progress report, in some concrete indicators, shows some of the challenges faced by Member States during the COVID-19 pandemic. The progress report reflects how some countries have advanced in the recognition of ancestral knowledge and traditional and complementary medicine, as well as in the development

² 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.

³ 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.

of capacity on intercultural health at all levels. PAHO continues to provide technical cooperation to improve the generation of evidence, as well as the work with Indigenous leaders in health matters, through effective participation and mutual respect.

PAHO is conducting work at the country level on a variety of health topics related to the health of Indigenous Peoples, ensuring their participation. These areas include maternal health, communicable diseases (TB, HIV, Trachoma) and non-communicable diseases and disaster risk reduction. PAHO continues providing technical cooperation in the review of laws and plans addressing the health of Indigenous Peoples with their participation. In the field of maternal health, for instance, Knowledge Dialogues between Indigenous Peoples and health personnel have been conducted in several countries of the region to address maternal health priorities.

The Strategy and Plan of Action on Ethnicity and Health builds upon the global commitment to sustainable development made in the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first. It is particularly relevant to highlight the regional commitments reflected in the PAHO's Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage and the Plan of Action on Health in all Policies. These instruments are in line with Goal 3, ensuring healthy lives for all at all ages, and recognize Universal Health Coverage as a core issue and an essential dimension in achieving this goal, based on the principles of equity, equality and non discrimination.

PAHO prioritizes its technical cooperation to build the capacity of health systems to address ethnicity in harmony with SDGs and international and human rights instruments.

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.

The approval of the first Policy on Ethnicity and Health by PAHO Member States during the 29th Pan American Sanitary Conference is a critical contribution for achieving the ends of the UNDRIP. This Policy constitutes a framework for Member States when addressing the health of Indigenous Peoples and incorporates five lines of action: 1) production of evidence; 2) promotion of policy action; 3) social participation and strategic partnerships; 4) recognition of ancestral knowledge and traditional and complementary medicine; 5) capacity development at all levels. UNDRIP is referred to and highlighted in the Policy on Ethnicity and Health.

In 2019, the Strategy and Plan of Action on Ethnicity and Health 2019-2025, aligned with the UNDRIP, was approved by PAHO Member States. This is another critical contribution for achieving the ends of the UNDRIP in the region of the Americas. The elaboration of the Strategy included a large process of consultation with Indigenous Peoples and other groups at country, sub-regional and regional levels. In September this year, PAHO presented a mid-term report of the Strategy with the information collected by its Member States on the progress made on the indicators of the Strategy and plan of action.

Important work is being conducted by PAHO/WHO at country level on a variety of health topics related to the health of Indigenous Peoples, ensuring their participation. These areas include maternal health and maternal mortality reduction, communicable diseases (including TB, Trachoma), non-communicable diseases and disaster risk reduction. PAHO has also provided technical cooperation in the review of laws and plans addressing the health of Indigenous Peoples with their participation.

The methodology of knowledge dialogues proposed by PAHO has proven to be a great contribution to address the health needs of Indigenous Peoples in the Region in multiple contexts. It promotes an intercultural approach to health including in contexts of pandemic. In the field of maternal health, knowledge dialogues between Indigenous Peoples and health personnel have been conducted in several countries of the region to address maternal health priorities of Indigenous women.

PAHO continues promoting the health of Indigenous Youth, including through the implementation of the Indigenous Youth Health Plan for Latin America and the Caribbean (2017).

Important actions are being conducted to strengthen collaboration with Indigenous partners in the region of the Americas. In 2019, the network integrating Indigenous knowledge and disasters risk reduction management was launched. This network is composed by Indigenous leaders from the Region.

Questionnaire to UN system

The Strategy and Plan of Action on Ethnicity and Health builds upon the global commitment to sustainable development made in the 2030 Agenda, to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first. PAHO's resolutions are in line with Goal 3, ensuring healthy lives for all at all ages, and make universal health coverage a central issue and an essential dimension in achieving this goal, based on the principles of equity, equality, and nondiscrimination.

Capacity building activities on intercultural health are being strengthened in the region. PAHO/WHO has also been prioritizing technical cooperation to build the capacity of health systems to address ethnicity in harmony with SDGs and international and regional human rights instruments.