



## **DRAFT STATEMENT ON OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

New York, 10 August 2020  
*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*

Dear Excellencies,  
Dear Friends,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples, a multiregional group of 20 States that comprise Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, the Kingdom of Denmark, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Norway, New Zealand, Spain, Paraguay, Peru, and my own country, Mexico.

The Group of Friends is pleased to take part in today's event on occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

We thank the organizers of today's event, and take note with high appreciation of the Secretary-General's message.

Indeed, we commemorate this International Day amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, which is having a serious impact on the health, wellbeing and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples across the world, who account for over 476 million people.

It is a challenge unlike any other.

It poses serious risks to Indigenous Peoples, both in urban and in rural areas, in particular, to the health and wellbeing of elders, persons with underlying health conditions, persons with disabilities, and women and children.

As we face this challenge, it is important that States and international organizations provide Indigenous Peoples with adequate, accessible, and culturally appropriate information, including through the use of Indigenous languages.

It is fundamental that we engage and include Indigenous Peoples in the response measures to COVID-19; that we ensure access to medicines, vaccines, medical equipment and healthcare; and that we take measures to prevent all forms of violence, especially those against Indigenous women and girls.

Equality and non-discrimination must guide our responses to COVID-19, and Indigenous Peoples should take part in their design, implementation and evaluation.

The recovery efforts should not overlook the needs nor the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Hard-won development gains should not be reversed.

Response and recovery efforts must build on Indigenous Peoples' resilience, traditional knowledge and practices.

Ultimately, it is about respecting and protecting the human rights of Indigenous Peoples in conformity with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and other relevant instruments.

Friends, Colleagues,

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities and vulnerabilities.

It is a watershed moment.

Today's commemoration must serve to raise awareness of the resilience and strength of Indigenous Peoples in the face of the pandemic, and renew our commitment to improving their health, wellbeing and livelihoods.

We must not only "Rebuild Better", we must also "Rebuild Fairer". And for that, we must "Rebuild Together".

As we recover from the immediate health-related consequences of the pandemic, the international community must renew its pledge to leave no one behind.

Thank you.