



THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE

Agenda item 4 (women, children, youth):

Thursday 19 April, 10am-1pm, CR 4

Background:

Indigenous women

Despite their enormous assets and contribution to society, indigenous women still suffer from multidimensional discrimination. Indigenous women are often prevented from realizing their full capabilities, as they struggle to overcome poverty, discrimination and multiple challenges to basic human rights. In many cases, indigenous women face loss of ancestral lands and natural resources, which leads to economic insecurity, and challenges the rights to traditional livelihoods, cultural identity and development.

In response to these challenges, as part of its strategic plan 2018–2022, UN-Women has been working on a strategy for the inclusion and visibility of indigenous women that supports the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the country level. For example, UN-Women plans to build the capacity of indigenous women and organizations (e.g. in Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay and the Philippines), commission studies on the situation of indigenous women in Latin America and the Caribbean in preparation for regional forums and mainstream indigenous issues in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and common country assessments (e.g. for El Salvador, Guatemala and Nepal).

UN-Women supported the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixty-first session with its focus on the empowerment of indigenous women, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Declaration. In its agreed conclusions, the Commission urged Governments to take measures to promote the economic empowerment of indigenous women, including by ensuring access to quality and inclusive education and meaningful participation in the economy by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers they face, including violence, and promoting their participation in relevant decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas, while respecting and protecting their traditional and ancestral knowledge and noting the importance of the Declaration for indigenous women and girls.

Furthermore, indigenous women have been active in the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Because of their advocacy, two resolutions concerning indigenous women have been recently adopted by the Commission: **resolution 46/v** and **resolution 46/aaa**, both of which encourage the implementation of economic and social policies that promote and protect the rights of Indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers they face.





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UNFPA addresses the health needs of indigenous women and girls by strengthening the collection and analysis of data on their health status. One of the key challenges in addressing the health needs of indigenous women and girls is the lack of data on their health status. To address this challenge, UNFPA collaborated with UNICEF and UN-Women in the development of a fact sheet on indigenous women's maternal health and morbidity, to be launched at the 2018 session of the Forum¹.

(Indigenous children and youth)

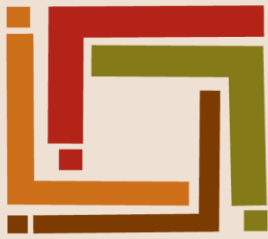
Indigenous children and youth have much to contribute to the world as engaged people with a significant understanding of their indigenous identity, cultural heritage, sustainable living and connection to their lands and territories. At the same time, many indigenous youths continue to face difficulties as a result of the intergenerational effects of colonization and assimilation policies, as well as the continued struggles to ensure their rights and identity as indigenous peoples. For example, indigenous youth experience much higher rates of suicide and self-harm compared to other youth as well as further challenges, including but not limited to illiteracy and drop-out rates, forced relocation and loss of land, unemployment, incarceration and a lack of legal protection.

To address these challenges, UNICEF has been working in the Congo, Gabon and the Philippines to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the system-wide action plan. Throughout 2017, UNICEF was the lead agency supporting the access of indigenous children to decentralized essential services and consolidating strategic partnerships and multi-stakeholder coordination under the authority of the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Protection of Indigenous Peoples in the Congo.

In response to the recommendation of the Permanent Forum to scale up the representative participation of indigenous youth from all regions, FAO and representatives of the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus have worked together to define the terms of reference of an indigenous youth consultative forum and to frame its objectives, role and functions, governance and structure. ILO is also exploring, together with other agencies, follow-up to the recommendation of the Permanent Forum for a study on access to the labor market and labor conditions of indigenous women and youth.

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/02/UN-Womens-Submissions-to-the-UNPFII.2018.pdf>





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In addition, many indigenous youth are organizing themselves in youth organizations to improve these conditions and ensure that their rights are respected and promoted. At a global level, the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus typically convenes during the UNPFII session to discuss and give guidance on issues related particularly to indigenous children and youth.

PFII Recommendations for the Youth Envoy

15th Session: The Permanent Forum appreciates the willingness of Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth to make visible the situation of indigenous youth, in particular concerning suicide and self-harm, in his advocacy. The Forum calls upon Member States to implement the recommendations of the international expert group meeting on indigenous youth, held in 2013 (see E/C.19/2013/3), in collaboration with the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development and with the full participation of indigenous youth. The Forum invites the Network to report on progress in this regard at the sixteenth session of the Forum. The Forum invites the Network and the Envoy to increase the participation of indigenous youth in the sessions of the Forum and all relevant United Nations forums, and to report on progress in this regard at the sixteenth session of the Forum.

14th Session: The Permanent Forum recommends that the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth, in cooperation with indigenous young people, urgently address self-harm and suicide among indigenous young people and invites him to inform the Forum on progress in that regard at its fifteenth session.

