



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

17 April 2019

Excellency,

Further to my letter dated 22 March 2019 and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/321 of 8 September 2017, I have the honour to share with you the detailed programme and concept note for the informal interactive hearing with indigenous peoples taking place on Thursday, 25 April 2019. The hearing will be now convened in Conference Room 1. A traditional ceremony will begin at 9:50 a.m.

Furthermore, there will be informal seating arrangement, similar to the arrangement of the last session, with designated seating for Member States and observers of the General Assembly and indigenous peoples on a first-come, first-served basis.

For further information, your office may contact my Senior Adviser, Ms. Lea Matheson (lea.matheson@un.org; +1 (347) 582 7210).

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. ESPINOSA".

María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Informal Interactive Hearing with Indigenous Peoples

25 April 2019

Concept Note

In September 2007, the General Assembly, through its resolution 61/295, adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In subsequent years the General Assembly have reaffirmed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the solemn commitment to respect, promote and advance and in no way diminish the rights of indigenous peoples and to uphold the principles of the Declaration.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 71/321 "Enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them:

Reaffirming further the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, and recalling the commitment by Member States to consider ways to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them, requested the President of the General Assembly "to organize and preside over informal interactive hearings and to prepare a summary of each hearing, during its seventy-second, seventy-third and seventy-fourth sessions, on the margins of the sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, with indigenous peoples, ensuring, to the extent possible, balanced regional representation".

The President of the General Assembly will convene the second informal interactive hearing with indigenous peoples on 25 April 2019. This second of three informal interactive hearings with indigenous peoples is part of the preparatory process for the consideration of possible further measures necessary to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in relevant United Nations meetings on issues affecting them by the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.

The 2019 hearing will provide an opportunity for indigenous peoples to express their views and make concrete proposals regarding their participation in the United Nations. Furthermore, it will provide an opportunity for an open and productive exchange between member states and indigenous peoples with the aim of building on the work of the first hearing.

The hearing will be divided into two panels on "selection criteria" and on "venues and modalities of participation". Both panels aim to:

- Provide an overview of progress, gaps and challenges;
- Encourage concrete steps on the way forward;
- Showcase practice and replicable examples of best practices;
- Ensure the appropriate consideration of new and emerging issues;
- Promote transparency and inclusiveness by encouraging open and frank debate.

Panel 1: "Selection criteria"

This panel will build on discussions held during the first informal interactive hearing with indigenous peoples including those on the right to self-determination and self-identification as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Some Member States argue state recognition is a determining factor to participation and that the number of indigenous peoples participating in UN processes must be limited.

The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Permanent Forum offer examples of indigenous peoples' participation at the United Nations. These could be discussed as possible good practices of participation of representatives of member states and indigenous peoples together in the United Nations.

Panel 2: venues and modalities of participation

This panel will build on previous discussions around the venues and modalities of participation. Different processes and bodies within the UN system have their own specific modalities for participation. Often the discussions are indistinct.

Past discussions reveal differing views around the venues for indigenous participation. For some member states, issues related to cultural and social affairs should be the focus, while for others it should be broader to include security, trade and development. Some member states stress the need to respect the UN's rules and procedures, thus preventing indigenous peoples from participating in closed meetings. Other member states support indigenous people's representatives' participation in relevant General Assembly meetings, including the Third Committee. This engagement was seen in a variety of ways including on a case-by case basis or as UN observers. Consideration should be given to what venues cover issues relevant to indigenous peoples as well as the contribution that indigenous peoples can make to advance discussions. Furthermore, there is a need for reflection on how to reconcile the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations with the importance of indigenous participation.

Two examples of a venue of participation are with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The UNFCCC's Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) and the LCIPP Facilitative Working Group was established at COP 24 in Katowice, December 2018, to enhance the participation of local communities and indigenous peoples. The platform was established to strengthen the knowledge, technologies, practices, and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples related to addressing climate change. Additionally, IFAD's Indigenous Peoples' Forum provides systematic engagement with indigenous peoples through a global meeting every second February in connection with IFAD's Governing Council, the main decision-making body. Additionally, a series of regional workshops lead up to each global meeting, to reflect the diversity of perspectives and recommendations gathered from indigenous peoples around the world. The various reform and change-management processes within the UN system aimed at making the UN effective, accountable and responsible, potentially provide opportunities for increased indigenous participation.

Participants

The meeting is open to member states and observers of the General Assembly, indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions. Indigenous peoples attending the 18th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues do not require additional accreditation to attend the informal interactive hearing.

Format

The informal interactive hearing will be convened by the President of the General Assembly.

The event will consist of an opening segment and two panels. The President of the General Assembly and the Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will deliver opening statements. This will be followed by the two panels. After each panel, the floor will be open to participants. Speakers will alternate between indigenous peoples and member states and observers of the General Assembly. Intervention should not last more than 3 minutes. Member states and observers of the General Assembly are invited to attend and participate, as appropriate, in the informal interactive hearing.

Participants are expected to present creative and concrete proposals. During the informal interactive hearing, participants are encouraged to focus on the topic under discussion.

Participants wishing to take the floor are invited to press the button on the desk.

Outcome

The President of the General Assembly will prepare a summary of the informal interactive hearing with indigenous peoples, which will inform the intergovernmental process that will resume during the 75th session of the General Assembly. The summary will be circulated to all Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations and to indigenous peoples.

Informal Interactive Hearing with Indigenous Peoples
25 April 2019

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| <p>9:50 – 10:00</p> | <p>Traditional Ceremony led by the International Indigenous Women’s Forum/Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indigenas (FIMI)</p> |
| <p>10:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.</p> | <p>Opening of the informal interactive hearing</p> <p>Opening remarks by the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Ms Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces</p> <p>Opening remarks by Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues</p> |
| <p>10:20 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.</p> | <p>Panel 1: “Selection criteria”</p> <p>This session will build on previous discussions around selection criteria and examine key issues of the right to self-determination and self- identification. While this is entrenched in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other international human rights law, the lack of adherence is an obstacle to Indigenous participation. Consideration of various examples such as the UNFCCC and the Permanent Forum may be helpful. Speakers are encouraged to provide ways to move the discussion forward.</p> <p><i>Guiding questions:</i></p> <p><i>What are the criteria for Indigenous Peoples’ representation at the United Nations?</i></p> <p><i>What tangible steps can be taken undertaken to ensure effective participation of indigenous peoples?</i></p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Claire Charters, Professor of Law, University of Auckland and former advisor to the PGA on Indigenous peoples’ participation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Adelfo Regino Montes, Director-General of the National Institute for Indigenous Peoples in Mexico 2. Dr. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine, Expert Member of UNFPII, Africa Region 3. Hereditary Chief Akile Ch’oh Grand Chief Edward John, Tl’azt’en Nation/First Nations Summit 4. Ms Vicky Tauli Corpuz, Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples <p>Interactive discussion with Member States and Indigenous Peoples Representatives</p> |

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| <p>1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.</p> | <p>Break</p> |
| <p>3:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.</p> | <p>Panel 2: “Venues and modalities of participation”</p> <p>This session will build on previous discussions around the cluster “venue of participation” as well as the modalities of participation. As in past discussions, it is difficult to discuss venue without examining the modalities. It will examine progress made and obstacles remaining to the participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations. Speakers are encouraged to provide concrete ways to move the discussion forward.</p> <p><i>Guiding questions:</i></p> <p><i>How should Indigenous peoples be represented in an evolving and inclusive United Nations?</i></p> <p><i>How do we reconcile the agreed principles of self-determination and self-identification with the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations?</i></p> <p>Moderator: H.E. Kai Sauer, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations in New York</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Royal /Ui/o//oo, Deputy Minister for Marginalized Communities Namibia 2. Ms Aili Keskitalo, President, Sami Parliament 3. Ms Tania Pariona, Congressista de la República del Perú 4. Andrea Carmen, Executive Director, International Indian Treaty Council <p>Interactive discussion with Member States and Indigenous Peoples Representatives</p> |
| <p>5:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.</p> | <p>Closing remarks by the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Ms Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces</p> |