

HLPF 2023 inputs – Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Inputs from DESA/DISD – Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch

Secretariat (e-mail: wang24@un.org, vaturi@un.org; copy perez7@un.org, panghulanv@un.org; cruz@un.org)

Progress, experience, lessons learned, challenges and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17 from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body, bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the SDGs and targets, including policy implications of their synergies and trade-offs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed existing inequalities and challenges that indigenous peoples across the Arctic region face. These include an infrastructure deficit that contributes overall to a higher prevalence of infectious diseases, poverty rates and other factors affecting the well-being of indigenous peoples. The pandemic and related border closures have also had a negative impact on indigenous peoples and their livelihoods. (E/2022/43, para 115)

Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia: The Permanent Forum heard accounts from indigenous peoples on how the use of traditional knowledge, medicine and food and the continuation of their traditional livelihoods had helped them in their efforts to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. Residence in remote areas and the restrictions on mobility posed by the authorities had protected indigenous communities from the virus. However, these conditions also signified limited access to public services, including emergency health care. In some instances, indigenous peoples' participation in decision-making had not returned to the pre-pandemic level. (E/2022/43, para 126)

The Permanent Forum urges States to address the stark inequality between indigenous and non-indigenous people in all aspects of life, which has been heightened as a result of COVID-19, by implementing in full the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in all their legal norms and public policies related to indigenous peoples. (E/2021/43-E/C.19/2021/10, para 28)

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by Member States in 2015, the Permanent Forum has repeatedly highlighted the importance of ensuring the meaningful and full participation of indigenous peoples in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Unfortunately, the world is not on track to meet globally agreed targets. This has been particularly evident during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which existing inequities have been exacerbated, placing the survival of indigenous peoples at greater risk. During the pandemic, indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women and girls, have not only been left behind, but have been left even further behind.

Bearing that in mind, the Permanent Forum considers it an opportune moment to reconsider and adjust the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to design a non-extractivist, sustainable agenda that fully incorporates a human rights-based approach. (E/2021/43-E/C.19/2021/10, paras 35-36)

The Permanent Forum notes the progress made in including indigenous peoples in several of the newly developed United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks developed in 2020 and the COVID-19 socioeconomic response plans. However, the Forum also notes the uneven

inclusion of indigenous peoples in United Nations country programming consultations and development, and the lack of disaggregated data, which perpetuates their invisibility. The Forum reiterates that indigenous peoples should participate in the preparation of common country assessments as well as the Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and that United Nations country teams should work with Governments to foster effective consultation with indigenous peoples. (E/2021/43-E/C.19/2021/10, para 71)

Three key areas where transformative actions for accelerated progress have been successful, and three key areas where support is most urgently needed, with regard to the cluster of SDGs under review in July 2023.

Ensuring a human rights-based approach to Indigenous Peoples' rights to land, waters, territories and resources, governance and secure customary tenure is essential for their continued contribution and significant role in achieving the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Indigenous lands, waters and territories need to be recognized directly and as a category separate from "protected areas" or "other effective area-based conservation measures", including when recognizing the land rights of indigenous women. A core element of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework should be the development of indicators reflecting indigenous peoples' rights to facilitate monitoring and implementation. There is an urgent and continuing need for resource mobilization for indigenous Peoples, including for indigenous women, to ensure their participation in shaping and implementing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. In this regard, the Permanent Forum acknowledges the recommendation to organize an expert meeting to develop and study the options and mechanisms for direct access to funding, to be transmitted to the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Furthermore, the Permanent Forum supports the continuation of the work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and related provisions of that Convention and urges States parties thereto to ensure adequate support to provide for a robust work programme. (E/2022/43, para 87)

Across the globe, indigenous peoples have experienced epidemics and pandemics introduced by outsiders. The epidemics have often led to the dispossession of their lands and to the loss of lives, cultures and languages. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and aggravated a range of pre-existing inequalities faced by indigenous peoples. In particular, it has highlighted the fact that indigenous peoples have inadequate access to infrastructure and services, including health care and education, and to markets; endure poor housing conditions; and experience diminished food security. These circumstances have led to disproportionately high infection and mortality rates among indigenous peoples in many countries. (E/2021/43-E/C.19/2021/10, para 86)

The rights of indigenous peoples in relation to the global energy mix* Note by the Secretariat

See: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/247/87/PDF/N2224787.pdf?OpenElement>

At its twentieth session, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues appointed Darío José Mejía Montalvo, a member of the Forum, to conduct a study on the rights of indigenous peoples in relation to the global energy mix and to present that study to the Forum at its twenty-first session.

Key messages for inclusion into the Political Declaration of the September 2023 SDG Summit.

- Recognizing Indigenous Peoples' comprehensive knowledge systems, and their participation as partners, is critical to implementing effective measures on several global issues: climate change, biodiversity, desertification, food security and sovereignty. This includes the right to food, energy transition, technological advances, the decades on ecosystem restoration, ocean sciences and water action, among others.
- This is necessary to ensure that some measures against climate change, such as the protection of land or energy transition, do not revictimize Indigenous Peoples. Multilateral and bilateral development cooperation should take strict precautions and encourage measures to recognize Indigenous Peoples and their territories.
- The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for the collection of disaggregated statistical data about indigenous peoples. Where such data are available, they have shown that the pandemic has affected indigenous peoples differently than other populations, requiring culturally appropriate approaches and solutions. The Permanent Forum reiterates its recommendation to Member States to collect and disseminate disaggregated statistical data on indigenous peoples, in close cooperation with indigenous peoples themselves, to support evidence-based policymaking and programming.

Relevant Links

PFII 2022 session report: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/355/75/PDF/N2235575.pdf?OpenElement>

The rights of indigenous peoples in relation to the global energy mix* Note by the Secretariat - At its twentieth session, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues appointed Darío José Mejía Montalvo, a member of the Forum, to conduct a study on the rights of indigenous peoples in relation to the global energy mix and to present that study to the Forum at its twenty-first session.

See: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/247/87/PDF/N2224787.pdf?OpenElement>

DESA policy brief #70 (2020) The Impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous Peoples

https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/PB_70.pdf

Indigenous Peoples and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Considerations

https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2020/04/COVID19_IP_considerations.pdf

Statement by the Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII): [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [French](#)

Interview with Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Radio Sweden: [English](#)