

**Input for the 2025 High-level Political Forum
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII)**

Your assessment of the impacts of the multiple and interconnected crises on the implementation of SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17.

- Good Health and Well-Being (SDG 3): Indigenous Peoples often face persistent health disparities, rooted in historical injustices and systemic inequities. Extractive activities, such as of critical minerals, on or near Indigenous lands and territories are causing significantly adverse health impacts through pollution and contamination of air, water, soil, and local food sources. Addressing this crisis requires Indigenous-led solutions based on Indigenous conceptualizations of health, such as, embracing the interconnectedness of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and environmental wellbeing. Indigenous leadership and participation in research initiatives and development of solutions are critical to ensure that Indigenous voices, perspectives, and priorities are central to health program design, implementation, and evaluation.
- Gender Equality (SDG 5): Disproportionately affected by climate change, loss of biodiversity, and environmental degradation and contamination, Indigenous women and girls are often at the forefront of local, national, and international environmental activism. They face harassment, criminalization, assassination and discreditation. Indigenous women and girls are too often victims of a multifaceted gender-based violence, which can include psychological, physical, sexual, economic, spiritual, political, and environmental violence.
- Partnership for the goals (SDG 17): Indigenous Peoples must be recognized as rights-holders and central actors in the international economic landscape, ensuring they are the architects of their own development in accordance with their right to self-determination. The lack of direct funding from donors to Indigenous Peoples, particularly in the context of climate change pledges, is a core issue that needs to be urgently addressed.

Three key areas where sustainable, inclusive, science-and evidence-based solutions for achieving the SDGs and leaving no one behind are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2025, also bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets.

- Sustainable Land Management and Ecosystem Restoration: Indigenous Peoples are leading efforts to restore ecosystems, preserve biodiversity, and implement sustainable land management practices. Traditional knowledge aligns with science-based solutions for climate adaptation (SDG 13) and food security (SDG 2). Programmes such as community-managed conservation areas and regenerative farming are preserving forests, watersheds, and diverse ecosystems, contributing to climate resilience

and carbon sequestration. This reflects the interlinkages between environmental sustainability, poverty reduction, and food security, fostering climate action while supporting the autonomy and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples communities.

- Health and Well-being through Indigenous Health Systems: Indigenous-led health initiatives, such as traditional medicine practices and community-based healthcare, are addressing health disparities in Indigenous Peoples' communities. These approaches integrate modern and Indigenous health knowledges to improve access to healthcare (SDG 3) while respecting Indigenous traditions. They also tackle inequalities (SDG 10) by prioritizing culturally relevant healthcare delivery, thus fostering social inclusion. These health systems acknowledge the interdependence between physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, essential for leaving no one behind.

- Education and Capacity Building for Sustainable Development: Educational initiatives that incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems promote inclusive, equitable, and quality education (SDG 4), while also focusing on reducing inequalities (SDG 10). By integrating Indigenous knowledges into curricula, these efforts ensure that Indigenous Peoples perspectives are valued, strengthening culture, fostering self-determination, gender equality (SDG 5), and economic opportunities. These solutions also address social inclusion, contributing to broader societal cohesion and respect for cultural diversity.

Three examples of measures to accelerate progress towards SDGs through well-coordinated actions in key transitions to bring progress to scale (food security, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution), building on interlinkages between SDGs to ensure cohesive progress.

- Improvement of international funding systems (SDGs 1,5,10,13): Indigenous Peoples manage at least 80% of the world's biodiversity and 25% of the land on the planet. However, Indigenous Peoples face a significant gap regarding financing, receiving less than 1% of climate and environmental investments. (Rainforest Foundation Norway, 2021) The lack of direct funding to Indigenous Peoples and the deficiencies in tracking intermediated funding are evident and demand urgent action. Promoting direct and quality funding to Indigenous communities can help reduce poverty (SDG 1), advance gender equality (SDG 5), reduce inequalities (SDG10) and accelerate climate action (SDG 13).

- Inclusive Decision-Making and Equal Partnerships (SDGs 5, 10, 16, 17): Indigenous Peoples representation in decision-making processes is critical to ensure that Indigenous rights are respected, and Indigenous voices heard, especially in matters related to environmental protection, resource management, and climate action. This inclusion helps ensure that policies and programs are culturally appropriate and effective in addressing Indigenous Peoples communities' unique needs and priorities. Equal partnerships between Indigenous Peoples, Member States, the UN system and scientists are central in supporting Indigenous-led initiatives that foster environmental sustainability. The key to

integrate Indigenous Peoples' knowledges into sustainable development strategies is through supporting their autonomy and self-determination.

- Free, Prior and Informed Consent: No explorative or extractive activity should occur on Indigenous lands and territories without free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), which must be upheld and enforced by the State. FPIC requires meaningful and continuous engagement that fully respects Indigenous Peoples' rights to understand, evaluate, and make informed decisions freely.

Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body or forum to support implementation of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration and the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Future, to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Pact for the Future (action 32):

- The International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032): Borne out of a recommendation of the Permanent Forum, the Decade aims to raise global awareness about the importance of preserving and promoting Indigenous languages. This initiative highlights the critical role of languages in maintaining cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and identity for Indigenous Peoples worldwide. The Decade focuses on documenting and revitalizing endangered languages, encouraging global collaboration (SDG 17). The aim is to reverse the trend of language loss, strengthen Indigenous cultures, upholding the linguistic rights of Indigenous Peoples, and contributing to the broader goals of cultural diversity and sustainable development.

- The PFII held an expert group meeting on the theme 'Indigenous Peoples in a greening economy' and at their 2024 session urged Member States to integrate the proposed innovative practices and sustainable economic models into national policies while supporting Indigenous entrepreneurship with a view to upholding traditional knowledge and sustainable development (para 29).

- Pact for the Future (commitments/para 27): Regarding the right to participation, based on the commitment by Member States, during the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014, to consider the participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations. The UNPFII has been advocating for the enhanced participation of Indigenous Peoples Representatives and Institutions in Meetings of Relevant United Nations Bodies on Issues Affecting Them.

- The Forum has also added an agenda item 'Dialogue on Indigenous platforms established within United Nations entities' since 2023 that focuses on the work Indigenous Peoples are undertaking in contributing to UN intergovernmental processes.

Recommendations and key messages to be considered for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration of

the 2025 HLPF.

- Indigenous Peoples manage at least 80% of the world's biodiversity, 25% of the land on the planet, and around 50% of the minerals that are critical for energy transition but receive less than 1% of total financial aid allocated to address climate change.
- A "just" energy transition is not possible without upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Without solid safeguards that fully uphold Indigenous Peoples' rights, the push for green energy and associated extractive activities risk repeating historical injustices.
- Indigenous Peoples' land stewardship, biodiversity protection and knowledge systems are critical to address the climate and biodiversity crises but can be significantly harmed by extractive activities occurring in and near their land and territories.
- No explorative or extractive activity should occur on Indigenous lands and territories without free, prior, and informed consent, which must be upheld and enforced by the State.
- With the no-contact principle as a guiding principle, the territories of Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact must be legally recognized and established as permanent prohibited zones for mining and extractive activities.
- For Indigenous Peoples, health is inseparable from spirituality, traditional practices, and the symbiotic relationship with the land.
- Indigenous Peoples must be recognized as rights-holders and central actors in the international economic architecture, ensuring they are the architects of their own development in accordance with their right to self-determination.
- The pursuit of peace for Indigenous Peoples requires a dual focus: addressing historical harms through reparative justice while establishing mechanisms to prevent future violations.
- Indigenous Peoples must be meaningfully engaged in peacebuilding and peacekeeping negotiations, conflict resolution and mediation, transitional justice, and resource management processes.