

UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 23rd Session April 15th - 26th, 2024
Statement on behalf of Global Indigenous Peoples Organizations preparatory meeting
April 12th-13th and 14th, 2024, at the UN Church Center.

Preamble

On 13 and 14 April 2024, Indigenous Peoples from around the world gathered for the Global Indigenous Peoples Caucus. This statement reflects the issues and concerns raised at that time. The following recommendations were informed by the statements made at the 2024 GIPC preparatory meetings.

Environment

The implementation of the “Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework,” target 3 (known as “30 by 30”) must reflect the realities of UNDRIP articles 15&26.

This includes areas designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites, NGO’s conservation efforts, and green energy projects¹. Impacted areas must be legally demarcated so that Indigenous Peoples can exercise their right to access and utilize those lands and resources and their responsibilities for ecological protection. Mining for “transitional” minerals portrayed as necessary for “green energy,” such as lithium, cobalt, and uranium has allowed a continuation of colonial environmental policies to masquerade as solutions.²

Culture:

We refer to UNDRIP Articles 11.1, 12.1 which provide protection for Indigenous peoples to practice, preserve, and maintain our language, culture, and spiritual traditions. Our languages, knowledge, and culture are intertwined with one another. In order to preserve our Indigenous lifeways, we need to preserve our languages. We must preserve our languages for future generations. Educational support is vital for language revitalization.

Education:

Based on Article 14, we recommend that educational systems and institutions work in strict cooperation with and under the guidance of Indigenous educators identified by our Nations and communities to teach where Indigenous histories originate, the enormous diversity and the extraordinary cultural insights and lifeways we bring to the world. Likewise, we recommend all educational institutions make it standard practice to teach the devastating histories against

¹ As referred to in E/C.19/2024/4.

² During the UNPFII 22 the Nordic Saami Youth representatives called out Green colonialism in their “Statement on Green Colonialism and its effects on Saami Youth.”
<https://aila.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Nordic-Sami-Youth-Statement-2023.pdf>.

Indigenous peoples that followed the colonial invasion, including the Doctrine of Discovery, and genocidal institutions, such as residential schools and boarding schools.

Many other factors contribute to our Indigenous students not learning, feeling secure and participating in the existing educational system. Thus, we recommend consistent healthy meals in school, comprehensive mental health services and support for traditional healers to address generational traumas, substantial salary incentives for teachers to stay in schools serving Indigenous youth and accommodations for our youth to participate in cultural activities outside of school such as traditional ceremonies, powwows, and hunting activities.

Health & Human Rights

Midwives

Traditional Indigenous midwives should be permitted to practice their traditional healing. Supporting Indigenous midwives and traditional Indigenous medical knowledge is a vital element of upholding UNDRIP Articles 23 and 24.1&2.

Human Rights

Palestine

We recommend and reaffirm that the Palestinians constitute a distinct “national, ethnical, racial and religious group” and hence a protected group under Article II of the Genocide Convention.³ Palestinians in Gaza are part of this protected group. We reaffirm the International Court of Justice’s demand that Israel must also take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of Article II and Article III of the Genocide Convention against members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip.⁴

Prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II of this Convention, in particular: 3(a) killing members of the group;

Per [Recommendation 2.63: Indigenous perspectives on health in UN organizations](#) »

Protection for Land Defenders

³ Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

⁴ General Assembly Resolution 77/247 on December 30, 2022.

As was stated at the opening of the UNPFII this year and affirmed by the World Bank. Indigenous peoples protect 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity. Indigenous traditional environmental knowledge is a vital element of protecting our Mother Earth. UNDRIP Article 25 emphasizes our distinctive spiritual relationship with our Indigenous territories. Additionally, UNDRIP Article 29 sections 1&2 reminds member states that they cannot store or dispose of hazardous materials on Indigenous lands without our free, prior, and informed consent.

We call for an immediate halt to the assassination, violence, and death threats against land and water defenders... We ask the OHCHR to create a monitoring and enforcement mechanism for the protections provided in UNDRIP Articles 8.2b para. 52 & 10. Indigenous Human Rights defenders and Land and Water Protectors must be protected.

Inclusion of Two-Spirit, Gay, and Queer-Gendered Identity Categories

We request that the UN be consistent in its language, especially in CEDAW/C/GC/39, and refer to LGBTIQ2S+ as is done in CEDAW para. 60 and more accurately include the diverse range of identities applicable to Indigenous women and girls—particularly in view of the fact that some Indigenous languages have complex terms for genders and sexualities that are not reflected in the six main UN languages. We would like to remind the permanent forum of Indigenous peoples inherent right to self determination and peaceful existence (UNDRIP Articles 3 and 7)

Economic and Social Development

For most Indigenous Peoples, there is little or no recognition of their status as such by the State, let alone protection of their human rights. Land loss is an underlying cause of Indigenous Peoples' extreme poverty and our very survival. We call on the UN system and States to progress and implement the 17 Sustainable Development Goals aligned with the realization of the basic right of Indigenous Peoples' self-determination.

A healthy environment is fundamental to sustainable economic development, yet corporations' extractive activities continue to be a relentless threat to Indigenous Peoples' lands and resources, lives, and wellbeing. We call for all States to, with the FPIC of Indigenous Peoples, implement with urgency effective Business and Human Rights National Action Plans, including meaningful enforcement.⁵ We urge States to take a whole of government, UNDRIP-compliant approach to child and youth Welfare.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence poses multiple threats to Indigenous Peoples' artistic works. We call on the UN High-Level Advisory body on Artificial Intelligence to ensure, in the development of their

⁵ UN OHCHR, National action plans on business and human rights, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-business/national-action-plans-business-and-human-rights>

recommendations for the international governance of AI, compliance with the UNDRIP.⁶ In particular, this must include active protection (1) of Indigenous Peoples' control over, access to, use of and equitable benefitting from their artistic works, and (2) from "data mining" and misappropriation of Indigenous Peoples' historical and other information without their FPIC.

Recommendation

1. UNDRIP be raised to the level of a convention to ensure the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (A/HRC/EMRIP/2019/3/REV.1; A/HRC/39/62).
2. UNDRIP articles 15 and 26 remind everyone of this relationship. The "Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework," target 3 (known as "30 by 30") designates 30% of our biodiversity for protection; however, in light of the realities of UNDRIP articles 15 and 26, it is imperative that we meet or exceed these percentages.
3. We are asking the UNPFII to strongly recommend the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, for a Moratorium on all carbon markets and offsets as enshrined in Article 6 of the Paris Agreement including carbon dioxide removals like carbon capture and storage, forest, soil and ocean offsets, nature-based solutions, biodiversity offsets and other geoengineering technologies.
4. We call upon the UNPFII to follow up on the Sixteenth Session's recommendation "that national and transnational corporations adhere to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in order to ensure the protection of the rights of Indigenous human rights defenders" 1(Session 16 p. 077).
5. Recalling the Permanent Forum's recommendation to develop a guide for Member States to fulfill their international obligation to consult with and obtain the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples in accordance with the standards established in the UNDRIP (UNPFII session 15, p. 030).
6. Remembering UN DESA Policy Brief No. 151, we call for additional protections around Indigenous languages.
7. Indigenous Peoples' Traditional Medicine, Midwifery, Knowledge continue to be co-opted by Multinational Corporations. We uplift the Permanent Forum's call to the Member States in its 15th Session, paragraph 44, to develop legislative measures with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples to protect

⁶ United Nations High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence, <https://www.un.org/techenvoy/ai-advisory-body>.

traditional midwives, medicine, and knowledge and to secure the rights of Indigenous Peoples to intellectual property rights.

8. We request that the UN be consistent in its language, especially in CEDAW/C/GC/39, and refer to LGBTIQ2S+ in a consistent manner. Expanding the acronyms used by the Committee to more accurately reflect the diverse range of gender and sexual identities that are not reflected in the six main UN languages.
9. We call upon the United Nations Office of the High Commission on Human Rights (OHCHR) to further the monitoring, reporting, and enforcement mechanisms for Indigenous communities, following up on UNDRIP Articles 8, 22, & 43. CEDAW/C/GC/39 is an important first step but more needs to be done. Welcoming the UNPFII's recommendation that this mechanism addresses the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous Women, ensuring full protection. Calling on EMRIP to address the issues of Indigenous Peoples who are disappeared, murdered, and persecuted for speaking out against Member States.
10. We call for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, GA Resolution 217A, to be applied as a common standard to all nations and peoples, including the rights of Palestine and its peoples.