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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

Recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues considered by the Economic and Social Council and emerging issues (item 6)

1. Indigenous peoples have been a distinct constituency at the United Nations since 1977 and, with the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the General Assembly in 2007, their inherent rights were affirmed as the international minimum standard. The Permanent Forum reiterates the position of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, namely that it is unacceptable to undermine the status and standing of indigenous peoples by combining or equating them with non-indigenous entities such as minorities, vulnerable groups or local communities. Such attempts, whether by States or United Nations entities, are not acceptable and will be challenged by indigenous peoples and those mandated to defend their rights. The Permanent Forum urges all United Nations entities and States parties to treaties concerning the environment, biodiversity and the climate to eliminate the use of the term “local communities” in conjunction with indigenous peoples, so that the term “indigenous peoples and local communities” would be abolished.

2. The Permanent Forum underlines the importance of the recognition by States of the indigenous peoples living on their territories – one of the key guarantees for the protection of indigenous peoples’ rights and interests in line with relevant international norms and standards, in particular the Declaration.



3. 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.

4. The Permanent Forum notes the importance of several concurrent United Nations Decades that are of importance to indigenous peoples. The Permanent Forum recommends that the United Nations entities responsible for the international decades declared by the General Assembly, such as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, and the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, ensure good communication and coordinate efforts regarding the participation of indigenous peoples and their issues. In this regard, the Permanent Forum recommends that the relevant United Nations entities report to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which, in turn, is invited to prepare a study on the funding, modalities and scale of indigenous peoples' participation in all four Decades. The Permanent Forum further invites Member States to support and fund cooperation during the four Decades to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples.

5. The Permanent Forum welcomes Human Rights Council resolution [48/13](#) on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and calls upon the General Assembly to reaffirm and reinforce the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and calls upon the organizations of the United Nations system to take action in this regard.

6. The Permanent Forum recognizes the importance of exploring possibilities for strengthening cooperation with the human rights treaty bodies on issues of relevance to its mandate. The Permanent Forum therefore invites the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies each to designate a representative to participate in the twenty-second session of the Permanent Forum, to be held in 2023.

7. The Permanent Forum wishes to include a standing agenda item on the Sustainable Development Goals, possibly aligned with the selected theme of its sessions, in order to prepare inputs for and enhance participation in the annual meetings of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. In addition to facilitating the substantive inputs of indigenous peoples and increasing the visibility of their concerns within the global review process, the agenda item would help to strengthen indigenous peoples' participation in the meetings of the high-level political forum and in United Nations processes globally. The Permanent Forum therefore invites representatives at its twenty-third session, to be held in 2024, to report on their work related to the Sustainable Development Goals and other global processes.

8. The Permanent Forum recalls the request it made at its fifteenth session (E/2016/43, para. 47) for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to host a joint seminar with the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other relevant United Nations mechanisms for the purpose of exploring the development of a new international mechanism on the repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains. In this regard, the Permanent Forum deeply regrets the absence of UNESCO from the expert group meeting organized by the Expert Mechanism in March 2020 in Vancouver, Canada, to discuss steps for the implementation of such a mechanism. The Permanent Forum recommends the leadership, involvement and cooperation of UNESCO in efforts to implement the recommendations arising from that meeting, as well as the previous recommendation of the Permanent Forum related to the repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains, including through the creation of an international database and inventory of such items accessible to indigenous peoples as a basis for initiating dialogue. The Permanent Forum wishes to remind UNESCO and other United Nations entities that the repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains is enshrined in articles 11 and 12 of the Declaration.

9. In September 2024, 10 years will have passed since the adoption by the General Assembly of the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, and of its annex, the Alta outcome document. The Permanent Forum calls upon the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly to hold a “World Conference on Indigenous Peoples Plus 10” in August 2024 to allow Member States, United Nations entities and indigenous peoples to report on implementation of the outcome document, with the full participation of indigenous peoples.

10. The Permanent Forum recommends that the Secretary-General actively support the enhanced participation of indigenous peoples by participating in the General Assembly process, associated regional dialogues and meetings with the Temporary Committee for the Indigenous Coordinating Body for Enhanced Participation in the United Nations. Furthermore, the Permanent Forum urges Member States to consult with indigenous peoples nationally, regionally and internationally on enhanced participation and to provide financial support for related activities so as to ensure the full, effective, direct and meaningful participation of indigenous peoples in that process.