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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

Follow-up to the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (item 6)

1. 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 coronavirus disease (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.
2. 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.
3. The Permanent Forum is concerned that the concept of building back better has been interpreted by some States as a means to continue the execution of harmful development projects, which for indigenous peoples means repeated violations of their collective and individual rights, expropriation of their lands and resources, criminalization of indigenous human rights defenders, increased poverty, inequality



and food insecurity, violence against indigenous women and girls, and limited access to justice.

4. The concept of building back better also implies opportunities to recognize and value the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples in safeguarding and conserving the environment, actions which can significantly advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It also implies addressing the lack of educational infrastructure, digital literacy and culturally appropriate education. It also requires the involvement of indigenous youth as they will inherit the responsibility to protect and preserve indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and preserve their traditional lands, resources and sacred sites upon which their cultural heritage and identity are based. Furthermore, indigenous women, as guardians of their traditional and gender-specific knowledge, must participate adequately in land ownership and governance at all levels.

5. The Permanent Forum reiterates its call to Member States to redouble their efforts to ensure disaggregated data collection on indigenous peoples (in accordance with target 17.10) and to include complementary indicators on indigenous peoples in voluntary national reports submitted by Governments for meetings of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Data disaggregated by ethnicity will help Governments to make informed decisions in a culturally appropriate way in response to the specific needs of indigenous peoples. The Forum underlines the importance of applying a human rights-based approach to data collection, including on ethnicity.

6. The Permanent Forum recommends that the United Nations and United Nations system organizations ensure the effective participation of indigenous peoples at the Food Systems Summit in 2021, as well as at all the related processes conducted in advance thereof and thereafter, including the pre-summit to be held in Italy from 19 to 21 July 2021. The food systems of indigenous peoples support sustainability and care for the environment and generate healthy foods important for the eradication of hunger and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. The Permanent Forum calls on Member States and international institutions to engage in full cooperation with indigenous peoples in their COVID-19 recovery efforts. The Forum further recommends that all available means of assistance, including financial support by international and national donor agencies and private philanthropic institutions, be allocated to initiatives led by indigenous peoples towards the achievement of the Goals.

Follow-up to the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

8. Implementation of the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, as set out in General Assembly resolution [69/2](#) and the Alta outcome document, is crucial for both meeting the aspirations of indigenous peoples worldwide and for ensuring that their rights and interests are guaranteed in decision-making processes. Further efforts should be made to reach the goal of enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples in the work of the United Nations from a system-wide perspective and in relation to various United Nations bodies and organs.

9. States Members of the United Nations and indigenous peoples must continue their constructive dialogue under the auspices of the President of the General Assembly, within the framework of the relevant decisions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council. It is also important to continue to make use of and explore ways to improve the opportunities provided through the existing formats and modalities of the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council and various entities of the United Nations system. In that regard, the Permanent Forum welcomes the adoption by the Assembly of

resolution 75/168 and the continuation of the dialogue within the context of the Forum at its twenty-first session.

10. In the study entitled “Representative institutions and models of self-governance of indigenous peoples in Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia: ways of enhanced participation” (E/C.19/2021/8), the authors emphasized that there were various forms and models of indigenous peoples’ participation in decision-making. They indicated that no one form or model was universal and that it was necessary to carefully study existing best practices in order to adapt flexibly to situations in diverse subnational regions. In general, indigenous peoples had representation in both executive and legislative bodies in subnational regions while having or developing their own decision-making institutions.

11. The authors also emphasized that regular and constructive dialogue between States, indigenous peoples’ organizations and private entities was vital and must be free of any discrimination or inequality regarding the status or number of indigenous peoples. The process of establishing a council of ombudsmen on the rights of indigenous peoples and of establishing consultative bodies with State institutions were highlighted as examples of best practices. A pragmatic approach was desirable in terms of using the opportunities that distinct political systems provided for participation in decision-making, in line with the minimum standards set by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It was also important to take into account the situation of indigenous peoples who lived across administrative and State borders. It was necessary to apply the principle of free, prior and informed consent in a comprehensive and systemic way.

12. The Permanent Forum recommends that Member States continue to develop legislation to support genuine indigenous representation and participation in decision-making. Legislative measures that create practical, economic, legal and political difficulties for the establishment and functioning of indigenous organizations and institutions worldwide should be addressed in order to allow for cross-border and international cooperation between indigenous peoples of different countries and with and within international organizations on issues and processes affecting them.

13. Indigenous peoples should be free to continue and enhance the participation of their institutions in various processes locally, nationally, regionally and globally in forms and ways that are culturally appropriate for them and that ensure equality and non-discriminatory access. In that regard, the Permanent Forum recommends that Member States and indigenous peoples involved in international regional cooperation forums exercise an inclusive and non-discriminatory approach towards indigenous peoples living in the countries and territories covered by such forums.

14. The Permanent Forum underlines that the right of indigenous peoples’ to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literature, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons, applies to all indigenous peoples, regardless of population or membership size.

15. The Permanent Forum recommends that States ensure that the participation of indigenous peoples in subnational and local decision-making bodies is based on equality and non-discrimination and on respecting indigenous peoples’ rights to choose their own representatives in accordance with their own procedures.