



General Assembly

Distr.: General
31 July 2024

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Fifty-seventh session

9 September–9 October 2024

Agenda items 2 and 3

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development

Stocktaking report compiling existing procedures on the participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations, highlighting existing gaps and good practices

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*

Summary

In the present report, submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 54/12, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights takes stock of and compiles existing procedures on the participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations, identifies gaps and good practices related to the participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations and offers conclusions and recommendations.

* Agreement was reached to publish the present document after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 54/12, concerning human rights and Indigenous Peoples, the Human Rights Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to prepare a stocktaking report, taking into account previous stocktaking exercises included in the reports of the Secretary-General of 2012 and 2020¹ and in the note by the President of the General Assembly in 2016,² compiling existing procedures on the participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations and highlighting existing gaps and good practices, and to present the report to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-seventh session.
2. OHCHR published an open call for inputs for the report on its website and sent a letter requesting inputs to heads of United Nations entities, members of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues³ and other United Nations bodies. OHCHR received one response from an organization working on Indigenous Peoples,⁴ four replies from Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions⁵ and 20 replies from United Nations bodies and entities.⁶ All submissions are available on a dedicated OHCHR website.⁷
3. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides that Indigenous Peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision-making institutions. Further, the Declaration affirms that organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system shall establish ways and means of ensuring the participation of Indigenous Peoples on issues affecting them.⁸
4. In the outcome document of the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples,⁹ Member States committed to consider ways to enable the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them.¹⁰ A system-wide action plan for ensuring a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted in 2016.¹¹ The theme of the present report is also linked to Sustainable Development Goal target 16.7.
5. Indigenous Peoples' participation at the United Nations has evolved over time. Their participation at the United Nations should be understood not only in terms of their presence at meetings but also their capacity to convey their views during processes so that they are

¹ [A/HRC/21/24](#) and [A/75/255](#).

² [A/70/990](#).

³ See <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/inter-agency-support-group-iasg>.

⁴ Association of Comprehensive Studies for Independence of the Lew Chewans.

⁵ National Iwi Chairs Forum – Aotearoa/New Zealand, Comunidad Originaria Punachizak, Semilla Warunkwa and the Assembly of First Nations.

⁶ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Global Communications, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), Office of the President of the General Assembly, Pan American Health Organization, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

⁷ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2024/call-inputs-stocktaking-report-existing-procedures-participation-indigenous>.

⁸ See United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, arts. 5, 9, 18 and 41.

⁹ General Assembly resolution 69/2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 33.

¹¹ [E/C.19/2016/5](#) and [E/C.19/2016/5/Corr.1](#).

meaningfully considered, acknowledging that Indigenous Peoples are an essential component of the global society.

II. Background

A. Historical overview of the participation Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations

6. The first records of Indigenous Peoples' attempts to engage with the international system go back more than a century. On 14 July 1923, the Chief of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, "Deskaheh" Levi General, travelled to Geneva to speak before the League of Nations, the first worldwide intergovernmental organization, seeking to obtain international recognition of the Confederacy; international recognition was not granted by the League of Nations.¹²

7. Although Indigenous Peoples received scant attention from the international community until the last three decades of the twentieth century, exceptionally, in the 1950s, the International Labour Organization (ILO), prompted by concerns about situations of forced labour among "native populations", began work on what became the ILO Convention concerning the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and Other Tribal and Semi-Tribal Populations in Independent Countries, 1957 (No. 107).¹³ The Convention was later criticized as assimilationist by the Indigenous movement. The Indigenous movement became more visible at the international level in the 1970s.¹⁴ In 1989, ILO adopted the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169).¹⁵

8. In 1971, the then Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (the current Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights) launched a study on the problem of discrimination against Indigenous Populations. The study produced a series of reports over the years. The final report was completed in 1983.¹⁶ In preparing the report, the Special Rapporteur called for inputs from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council,¹⁷ Indigenous populations and other entities.

9. Indigenous Peoples' advocacy led to the establishment of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations by the Sub-Commission in 1982.¹⁸ At its first session, in August 1982, the Working Group decided that, in fulfilling its mandate, it would be open and accessible to representatives of Indigenous populations and NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. The Working Group coordinated the drafting of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples from 1985 until its discontinuation in 2006.¹⁹ The Working Group was replaced by the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2008.

10. In its resolution 1994/49 on the participation of Indigenous persons and organizations in bodies of the United Nations during discussion of the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples,²⁰ the Sub-Commission recommended that the Commission

¹² See <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/commemorating-100th-anniversary-deskahehs-campaign-league-nations>.

¹³ See https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C107.

¹⁴ State of the World's Indigenous Peoples (United Nations publication, Sales No. 09.VI.13), p. 2, available at https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP/en/SOWIP_web.pdf.

¹⁵ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/indigenous-and-tribal-peoples-convention-1989-no-169>.

¹⁶ See <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/publications/2014/09/martinez-cobo-study/>.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, sect. IV.B, Economic and Social Council.

¹⁸ State of the World's Indigenous Peoples (2009), p. 2.

¹⁹ See <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/GuideIPleaflet5en.pdf>.

²⁰ E/CN.4/1995/2 – E/CN.4/Sub.2/1994/56, sect. II.A.

on Human Rights approve the participation of Indigenous persons and organizations, without regard to consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

11. In March 1995, the Commission on Human Rights adopted resolution 1995/32 on the establishment of the working group of the Commission on Human Rights to elaborate a draft declaration.²¹ Accreditation procedures for the participation of organizations of Indigenous Peoples not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council were set out in the annex to resolution 1995/32.

12. Several decades passed before Indigenous Peoples were able to have a specific space for participation at the United Nations. The drafting and negotiation process of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which began in 1985, was only concluded in 2007, 22 years later. The Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/295 in September 2007. The process was slow due to concerns expressed by some States regarding some of the core provisions of the draft declaration, namely the right to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples and the control over natural resources on Indigenous Peoples' traditional lands.²²

B. Human Rights Council process for the enhanced participation of Indigenous Peoples

13. Enhanced participation of Indigenous Peoples in the work of the Human Rights Council has been under discussion since September 2011 until the present time. Although the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has been directly involved in strengthening Indigenous Peoples' participation in the work of the Human Rights Council since its establishment in 2007, Indigenous Peoples have nevertheless found it challenging to participate as, in the majority of formal meetings, they are required to be accredited by an NGO in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

14. In August 2011, the Expert Mechanism proposed that the Human Rights Council encourage the General Assembly to adopt appropriate permanent measures to ensure that Indigenous Peoples' governance bodies and institutions, including traditional Indigenous governments, Indigenous parliaments, assemblies and councils, were able to participate at the United Nations as observers with, at a minimum, the same participatory rights as non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.²³

15. In July 2012, following a request by the Human Rights Council,²⁴ the Secretary-General submitted a report on ways and means of promoting participation at the United Nations of Indigenous Peoples' representatives on issues affecting them.²⁵ The report concluded that: "It is hoped that this spirit of openness and continuing collaboration with Indigenous Peoples will be improved by further enhancement of procedures to enable Indigenous Peoples' participation in all relevant work of the United Nations, in a way that realizes, respects, promotes and protects their rights under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other relevant international human rights standards".²⁶

16. In August 2017, the Expert Mechanism proposed that the Human Rights Council make further efforts to facilitate the participation in its work of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions, as opposed to NGOs, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This would include all meetings relevant to the rights of Indigenous Peoples, in particular the dialogue between the Expert Mechanism

²¹ E/1995/23, sect. II.A.

²² See <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-%20the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html> (historical overview).

²³ A/HRC/18/43, proposal 3 (d).

²⁴ Human Rights Council resolution 18/8, para. 13.

²⁵ A/HRC/21/24.

²⁶ Ibid., para. 66.

and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the annual half-day discussion on the rights of Indigenous Peoples.²⁷

17. In July 2019, the Human Rights Council held an intersessional interactive dialogue on ways to enhance the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of the Council on issues affecting them.²⁸ While some Indigenous Peoples participated in the meeting and were able to speak, several representatives expressed their concern at the fact that the interactive dialogue had been undertaken following the rules of procedure and modalities of the Council, severely limiting the participation of Indigenous Peoples and their representative institutions by requiring them to be accredited by an NGO in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.²⁹

18. In October 2019, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 42/19, in which it decided to hold an intersessional round table on possible steps to enhance the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of the Human Rights Council on issues affecting them. As a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the round table was held virtually on 16 July 2021.³⁰ Indigenous Peoples participated in and moderated round-table segments. One of the conclusions of the round table was that: "In any future discussions in the Human Rights Council on the enhanced participation of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Peoples' organizations and representative institutions should be allowed to participate without Economic and Social Council accreditation".³¹

19. In November 2022, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 48/11 on human rights and Indigenous Peoples, OHCHR organized an expert workshop on possible ways to enhance the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the work of the Council. Indigenous Peoples from the seven Indigenous sociocultural regions and Member States representatives participated in the workshop.³² It was recommended that "a new status, distinct from any status associated with accreditation under the Economic and Social Council, should be established for the accreditation and meaningful and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in the work of the Human Rights Council".³³

20. In its resolution 54/12, the Human Rights Council decided to continue to discuss and develop further steps and measures necessary to enable and facilitate the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions duly established by themselves in the work of the Human Rights Council, including through two two-day intersessional meetings of the Council, held on 18 and 19 July 2024 and 17 and 18 October 2024.³⁴ Indigenous Peoples participated in that manner in the first intersessional meeting, held on 16 and 17 July 2024, a formal meeting of the Council. In the same resolution, the Council also requested the President of the Council to organize the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions duly established by themselves from the seven Indigenous sociocultural regions, in consultation with the Expert Mechanism and with the support of OHCHR, for the interactive dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and with the Expert Mechanism at the fifty-seventh session of the Council, which will take place in the autumn of 2024.³⁵

²⁷ A/HRC/36/57, para. 11.

²⁸ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/intersessional-interactive-participation-ip>.

²⁹ A/HRC/44/35, para. 43.

³⁰ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/intersessional-roundtable-indigenous-people>.

³¹ A/HRC/49/69, para. 78.

³² See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/events/events/2022/expert-workshop-possible-ways-enhance-participation-indigenous-peoples-work>.

³³ A/HRC/53/44, para. 52.

³⁴ Human Rights Council resolution 54/12, para. 16.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 23.

C. General Assembly processes for enhanced Indigenous Peoples' participation

21. Since the adoption of the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014,³⁶ Indigenous Peoples representatives and institutions have been able to participate in all consultations and informal interactive hearings that have taken place at the General Assembly regardless of their status with the Economic and Social Council. However, no formal decision has been taken to change the status quo related to the participation of Indigenous Peoples.

22. The General Assembly has taken a number of measures to gradually increase Indigenous Peoples' participation in its work and that of the United Nations. It proclaimed 1993 the International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples.³⁷ At the opening ceremony of the International Year at Headquarters in New York, Indigenous Peoples' representatives spoke from the podium of the General Assembly for the first time.

23. Indigenous Peoples organized and held meetings in Alta, Norway, in June 2013, and in Quito in January 2020. The meetings were pivotal in advancing the agenda for enhanced participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations. The Alta meeting, the purpose of which was to exchange views and proposals and to develop collective recommendations for the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, resulted in the adoption of the Alta outcome document, which highlighted key priorities for Indigenous Peoples, in particular self-determination and land rights.³⁸ The Quito meeting focused on enhancing Indigenous participation in climate change processes.³⁹

24. In 1994, the General Assembly, in its resolution 48/163, proclaimed the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (1995–2004), and in 2004, in its resolution 59/174, proclaimed the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (2005–2014). One of the five objectives of the Second International Decade was to promote the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in decisions that directly or indirectly affect their lifestyles, traditional lands and territories and cultural integrity.⁴⁰

25. In September 2014, the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York. In the outcome document, Member States committed themselves to consider, at the seventieth session of the General Assembly, ways to enable the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them.⁴¹

26. For participation in the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, the General Assembly decided that: "Organizations and institutions of Indigenous Peoples interested in participating in the World Conference, and whose aims and purposes are in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, should be invited to submit applications for accreditation to the Secretariat through an open and transparent procedure, in accordance with the established practice".⁴²

27. In December 2015, the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/232 on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, in which it requested the President of the General Assembly to conduct consultations on the possible measures necessary to enable the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them and requested the President to prepare a compilation of the views presented during the consultations.

³⁶ General Assembly resolution 69/2.

³⁷ General Assembly resolution 47/75.

³⁸ See https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/wc/AdoptedAlta_outcomedoc_EN.pdf.

³⁹ See <https://cendoc.docip.org/collect/cendocdo/index/assoc/HASH012b/9dd1a3e1.dir/ENG%20Quito%20Outcome%20Document%202020%25281%2529.pdf>.

⁴⁰ See <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/second-international-%20decade-of-the-worlds-indigenous-people.html>.

⁴¹ General Assembly resolution 69/2, para. 33.

⁴² General Assembly resolution 66/296, para. 3 (h).

28. In February 2016, the President of the General Assembly appointed four advisers (two representatives of Member States and two representatives of Indigenous Peoples) to conduct the above consultations.⁴³ In addition to an online consultation launched in March 2016, three face-to-face consultations took place between May and June 2016. Later that year, the President of the Assembly published a compilation of views on possible measures necessary to enable the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in relevant United Nations meetings on issues affecting them and of good practices within the United Nations regarding Indigenous Peoples' participation.⁴⁴

29. The four advisers led consultations in December 2016 and May 2017. On 8 September 2017, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/321 on enhancing the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them. In accordance with that resolution, the Secretary-General submitted a report that concluded that there was a lack of information and understanding of the process among all parties and that there was therefore a need for further consultations with Indigenous Peoples in all regions.⁴⁵

30. Pursuant to the same resolution, the Presidents of the General Assembly during the seventy-second, seventy-third and seventy-seventh sessions of the General Assembly presided over a series of informal interactive hearings, as part of the preparatory process for the consideration of further measures necessary to enhance the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in relevant United Nations meetings on issues affecting them, and circulated summaries of the interactive hearings.⁴⁶

31. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 78/189 on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the President of the General Assembly appointed two co-facilitators and two advisers from Indigenous Peoples to assist the co-facilitators in conducting consultations on the issue during the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly.⁴⁷ The co-facilitators held the first consultation in April 2024. The second consultation was held in May 2024. Additional consultations took place until June 2024.⁴⁸

III. Existing participation procedures in United Nations mechanisms focused on Indigenous Peoples

32. Indigenous-specific mechanisms at the United Nations have shown flexibility in terms of ensuring Indigenous Peoples' participation. Indigenous Peoples are not required to have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to participate in their meetings or to interact with them otherwise.⁴⁹

A. United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples

33. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples, established in 1985 by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/131, was originally mandated to assist representatives of Indigenous communities and organizations to participate in the deliberations of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations by providing them with

⁴³ See https://www.un.org/pga/70/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2015/08/18-Feb_Rights-of-Indigenous-Peoples-18-February-2016.pdf.

⁴⁴ A/70/990.

⁴⁵ A/75/255, para. 63.

⁴⁶ See https://social.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/3_Informal-interactive-hearing-Letter-to-Indigenous-Peoples-31-May.pdf; <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2019/05/Repr.-of-Indigenous-Peoples-Summary-of-the-Informal-interactive-hearing.pdf>; and <https://social.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/PGA-Summary-Interactive-Hearing-with-Indigenous-Peoples-20-April-2023.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Submission from the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

⁴⁸ See <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/participation-of-indigenous-peoples-at-the-un>.

⁴⁹ For further information on each mechanism, see A/HRC/21/24.

financial assistance funded through voluntary contributions from Governments, NGOs and other private or public entities.

34. The mandate of the Voluntary Fund has been expanded to support the participation of Indigenous Peoples in other United Nations meetings.⁵⁰ In 2015, the mandate of the Fund was expanded once again so that it could assist representatives of Indigenous Peoples' organizations and institutions to participate in the consultation process on the procedural and institutional steps to enable the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them during the seventieth and seventy-first sessions of the General Assembly.⁵¹ Since its establishment, the Fund has provided financial assistance to over 4,000 Indigenous Peoples' representatives to ensure their participation in United Nations meetings.

35. The selection of grantees for the Voluntary Fund is based on several criteria, which take into account the specific accreditation rules of United Nations bodies and mechanisms.⁵² Grantees are not required to be members of an organization with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, as the Fund seeks to support populations and communities of Indigenous Peoples at the grassroots level. A board of trustees composed of five persons with relevant experience in Indigenous issues recommends selected grantees.

B. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

36. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established in July 2000 by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2000/22 as a high-level advisory body to the Council. The first session of the Permanent Forum was held in May 2002. Member States, United Nations entities, other intergovernmental organizations, Indigenous Peoples' organizations and academia accredited to the Forum and NGOs in consultative status with the Council can participate in the annual sessions of the Forum as observers.

37. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs makes practical arrangements to accredit participants who register to attend the annual sessions. The principle of self-identification applies.⁵³

38. The participation of Indigenous Peoples in the sessions of the Permanent Forum is in-person only. Indigenous Peoples can sign up for the speakers' list during the plenaries or speak during the interactive dialogues. Participants can suggest recommendations for the consideration of the members of the Permanent Forum. There are reserved seats and nameplates arranged for Indigenous Peoples' organizations in the conference rooms where the official meetings are held, including in the General Assembly Hall.⁵⁴ The Department of Global Communications, through United Nations News and United Nations Television and Video, makes efforts to promote and amplify the voices of Indigenous Peoples who participate in the sessions of the Forum, regardless of their status with the Economic and Social Council.⁵⁵

C. Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples

39. In April 2001, the then Commission on Human Rights established the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous People through its resolution 2001/57. The work of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, under its mandate renewed by the Human Rights Council in 2022, includes to gather, request, receive and exchange information and communications from all relevant sources, including Governments, Indigenous Peoples and their communities and

⁵⁰ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-us/funding-budget/indigenous-peoples-fund/mandate-fund>.

⁵¹ General Assembly resolution 70/232, para. 8.

⁵² See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-us/funding-budget/indigenous-peoples-fund/criteria-selecting-beneficiaries-un-voluntary-fund-indigenous-peoples>.

⁵³ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, arts. 9 and 33.

⁵⁴ Submission from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

⁵⁵ Submission from the Department of Global Communications.

organizations, including indigenous women's organizations, on alleged violations and abuses of the rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as to develop a regular cooperative dialogue with all relevant actors, including Governments, relevant United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, and with Indigenous Peoples, national human rights institutions, NGOs and other regional or subregional international institutions, including on possibilities for technical cooperation at the request of Governments.⁵⁶

40. The Special Rapporteur has established methods that enable Indigenous Peoples to communicate directly with the mandate.⁵⁷ The Special Rapporteur continues to receive and exchange information and communications from all relevant sources, particularly Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions. The Special Rapporteur and other special procedures mandate holders have developed a regular cooperative dialogue with all relevant actors, regardless of their consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

D. Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

41. In December 2007, the Human Rights Council established the Expert Mechanism as a subsidiary expert mechanism.⁵⁸ The Expert Mechanism held its first session in October 2008.

42. Participation as observers by organizations without consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in the sessions of the Expert Mechanism is permitted under Human Rights Council resolution 6/36, by which the Council established the Expert Mechanism, and 33/25, by which the Council amended its mandate. Accordingly, the annual meeting of the Expert Mechanism is open to the participation, as observers, of States, United Nations mechanisms, bodies and specialized agencies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations and mechanisms in the field of human rights, national human rights institutions and other relevant national bodies, academics and experts on Indigenous issues, NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; the meeting is also open to Indigenous Peoples' organizations and other NGOs regardless of their consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.⁵⁹

43. Upon request, the Expert Mechanism can assist Member States and/or Indigenous Peoples in identifying the need for and providing technical advice regarding the development of domestic legislation and policies relating to the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as relevant, which may include establishing contacts with other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.⁶⁰

44. OHCHR manages the accreditation process for those interested in attending the annual meeting of the Expert Mechanism. In that process, the principle of self-identification is also applied.

45. Indigenous Peoples' participation in the sessions is in-person only. All participants enjoy the same opportunity to participate in the sessions, including making written and oral interventions. Requests for the floor are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis upon signing up for the list of speakers. Participants can suggest recommendations for the consideration of the members of the Expert Mechanism, for instance, in the preparation of a specific report.

IV. Existing participation procedures in other United Nations organs and bodies

46. As described above, while progress has been made at both the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council concerning Indigenous Peoples' participation, formal rules

⁵⁶ Human Rights Council resolution 51/16, para. 2 (b) and (f).

⁵⁷ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-indigenous-peoples>.

⁵⁸ Human Rights Council resolution 6/36, para. 1.

⁵⁹ Human Rights Council resolution 33/25, para. 13.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 2.

limiting participation to NGOs with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council remain.

A. General Assembly

47. The General Assembly has discussed participation of Indigenous Peoples for a number of years and has taken some steps towards greater inclusion, in particular concerning meetings related to Indigenous Peoples. In terms of current participation procedures, the President of the General Assembly may invite Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions to participate in meetings of the Assembly, subject to the specific modalities of each meeting.⁶¹ A few Indigenous intergovernmental organizations have been granted observer status by the Assembly, allowing them to attend all of its public sessions.⁶²

48. Participation of Indigenous Peoples and seating arrangements at the United Nations General Assembly Hall have evolved to enable greater engagement and visibility of Indigenous Peoples. Most recently, during the high-level event to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, held on 17 April 2024, Indigenous Peoples' representatives were able to deliver statements from the podium.⁶³ On that occasion, seating on the main floor of the General Assembly Hall was divided in two, between Member States and Indigenous Peoples' organizations.⁶⁴

49. Despite such advances, significant gaps remain. For example, during the informal consultations of the Third Committee of the General Assembly on the resolution on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Peoples cannot be present in the room or participate in negotiations on the resolution.⁶⁵

B. Economic and Social Council

50. The Economic and Social Council grants consultative status to NGOs, which allows them to participate in United Nations deliberations, including the meetings of its subsidiary bodies and ad hoc processes, events organized by the President of the General Assembly and some human rights mechanisms.⁶⁶

51. Participation by NGOs in the meetings of the Economic and Social Council, its committees and sessional bodies is regulated by its rules of procedure and by Council resolution 1996/31. Under that resolution, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations recommends which NGOs should be granted consultative status with the Council. Information on the process is available in the official languages of the United Nations. Representatives of NGOs in general, special or roster consultative status with the Council may participate as observers in its public meetings as well as the meetings of its committees and sessional bodies.⁶⁷

52. As of 17 July 2024, there are 6,494 NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, including organizations engaged in Indigenous Peoples' rights. The current Council rules of procedures for obtaining consultative status apply only to NGOs. There is no special status for the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions within the Council.

⁶¹ Submission from the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

⁶² Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean; see <https://www.filac.org/about-us/>.

⁶³ See <https://www.un.org/pga/78/high-level-plenary-meeting-of-the-general-assembly-known-as-the-world-conference-on-indigenous-peoples/>.

⁶⁴ See <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1o/k1o778o3xr>.

⁶⁵ See <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/about-us/general-assembly-resolutions-on-indigenous-peoples.html>.

⁶⁶ See <https://ecosoc.un.org/en/ngo/consultative-status>.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

C. Human Rights Council

53. General Assembly resolution 60/251 governs participation in the Human Rights Council. Rule 7 (a) of the Council's rules of procedure provides that the Council shall apply the rules of procedure established for committees of the General Assembly, as applicable, unless subsequently otherwise decided by the Assembly or the Council, and the participation of and consultation with observers, including States that are not members of the Council, the specialized agencies, other intergovernmental organizations and national human rights institutions, as well as NGOs, shall be based on arrangements, including Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31, and practices observed by the Commission on Human Rights, while ensuring the most effective contribution of those entities.⁶⁸

54. NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council are entitled to attend Human Rights Council sessions, except for proceedings concerning the Council's confidential complaints procedure, to submit written statements and make oral interventions, to participate in informal meetings, debates, interactive dialogues, panel discussions and the adoption of outcomes of universal periodic reviews and to organize parallel events.

55. As part of the universal periodic review process, civil society actors, including NGOs without consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, can submit information to include in the stakeholders' information summary. However, only NGOs in consultative status with the Council may attend the sessions of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review.⁶⁹

56. NGOs without consultative status with the Economic and Social Council are permitted to attend meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Human Rights Council, such as the Social Forum, the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, the Forum on Minority Issues and sessions of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development.

57. The Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, a subsidiary body composed of 18 independent experts, has consulted with NGOs without consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, as well as with Indigenous Peoples in the preparation of its mandated studies and reports.⁷⁰ During the informal consultations on the Human Rights Council's resolution on human rights and Indigenous Peoples, NGOs in consultative status with the Council participate in discussions of the resolution.

V. Gaps related to the participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations

58. Many of the persistent gaps to Indigenous Peoples' participation at the United Nations are related to the need for their establishment as NGOs with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. However, other obstacles exist, including: the lack of platforms for Indigenous Peoples' participation or focal points in United Nations entities specifically working on Indigenous Peoples; geographical barriers; language barriers and cultural obstacles; insufficient funding; accessibility barriers for Indigenous persons with disabilities; fear of reprisals; and difficulties in obtaining visas.

⁶⁸ Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, annex, sect. VII, Rules of procedure.

⁶⁹ See <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/NgoHandbook/ngohandbook7.pdf>.

⁷⁰ This practice was exemplified in the preparation of the report on the impact of new technologies for climate protection on the enjoyment of human rights, mandated by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 48/14. In addition, at its twenty-ninth session, in February 2023, the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council held a discussion on the impact of new technologies for climate protection on the enjoyment of human rights, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 48/14. In that context, Indigenous Peoples' representatives were able to present statements.

A. Accreditation mechanism and criteria

59. According to one submission for the present report, the accreditation mechanism for establishment as an NGO with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council does not sufficiently accommodate Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions, given their particularities, needs and contributions. While a few larger non-profits (particularly in North America) have applied for and received consultative status with the Council, the existing system is not adapted for the large majority of Indigenous Peoples' organizations.⁷¹

60. The requirements for accreditation pose a number of obstacles for Indigenous Peoples. For example, to obtain consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, an organization must provide a copy of its constitution/charter or statutes/by-laws and submit its most recent financial statement.⁷² Many Indigenous Peoples' institutions or organizations do not have formal constitutions or statutes, and some may not have financial statements. Other obstacles may include their inability to constitute a formal organization at the national level.

61. Indigenous Peoples are generally not organized as NGOs and their governing structures and institutions are diverse. While in some cases NGOs composed of Indigenous Peoples or Indigenous self-government institutions have applied for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, in the discussions on enhanced participation of Indigenous Peoples, most have supported the addition of a separate category or status of participation that would afford at least the same level of participation as that accorded to NGOs in consultative status with the Council.⁷³

B. Lack of specific policies, platforms or focal points

62. According to the submissions received, not all entities of the United Nations system have policies or platforms for engagement with Indigenous Peoples, nor do they have dedicated focal points for Indigenous Peoples' issues. The absence of dedicated focal points can lead to a lack of coordination in implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the system-wide action plan for ensuring a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the Declaration within the various entities.

63. Some United Nations entities, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), ILO, OHCHR, the Pan American Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), have dedicated focal points for Indigenous Peoples; this has proven to be helpful.

C. Geographical and administrative constraints

64. Certain United Nations administrative procedures for travel to attend official United Nations meetings were mentioned in submissions for the report as being a challenge to the participation of Indigenous Peoples. Some procedures are not adapted to the circumstances of Indigenous Peoples. Many Indigenous Peoples live in places where access to electronic means of communication and transport infrastructure is limited. Further, in its submission, the Pan American Health Organization noted that geographical constraints may present obstacles to participation owing to difficulties in travelling to and from remote areas, sometimes involving complex itineraries, including the need for several days of travel, which may not be easy to organize, depending on internal travel arrangements.

⁷¹ Submission from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

⁷² See <https://ecosoc.un.org/en/ngo/apply-for-consultative-status>.

⁷³ [A/70/990](#), paras. 11 and 12; [A/75/255](#), paras. 23 and 42; and [A/HRC/53/44](#), paras. 12 and 31.

D. Language barriers and cultural obstacles

65. While formal meetings at the United Nations system generally offer simultaneous interpretation into the six official languages of the United Nations, many Indigenous Peoples do not communicate in those languages, making engagement more challenging.

66. In its submission, IFAD considered language barriers to be an issue, specifically in the Asia-Pacific region. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change noted in its submission that while Indigenous Peoples' rich experiences, insights and knowledge are often conveyed through oral traditions, its internal process relies on findings based on peer-reviewed articles.⁷⁴ Furthermore, because some United Nations platforms are insufficiently user-friendly and are not always available in all six United Nations official languages, many Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions have difficulty registering for United Nations meetings.

E. Lack of funding

67. In their submissions, FAO, UNEP, UNESCO, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), WIPO, and the World Food Programme considered lack of funding to be a significant challenge in ensuring consistent engagement with Indigenous Peoples. FAO noted the lack of effective implementation of free, prior, and informed consent on the part of Indigenous Peoples as a result of insufficient funding for capacity-building processes for the exercise of that right and the lack of will from donors to support such processes as one of the main challenges to Indigenous Peoples' participation in engagement with FAO.

68. In their submissions, Indigenous Peoples raised the issue of lack of funding for in-person participation in United Nations meetings and processes on issues that may affect them.⁷⁵ They called for more the allocation of more resources to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples.⁷⁶

F. Accessibility

69. Despite the adoption of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy⁷⁷ in 2019, Indigenous Peoples with disabilities continue to face significant accessibility barriers within the United Nations, including a lack of minimal accessibility services for communication, such as sign interpretation and closed captioning, as well as accessible documentation in easy-to-understand or plain language. Additionally, both physical and digital environments often remain inaccessible. With limited exceptions, reasonable accommodation systems are not in place to address such shortcomings.

G. Reprisals

70. Reprisals against Indigenous Peoples for cooperation with United Nations entities hinder their effective participation in United Nations meetings. In his most recent report, the Secretary-General identified, with concern, the targeting of representatives of Indigenous Peoples during their participation in United Nations meetings or when interacting with the United Nations at the country level.⁷⁸ In order to encourage the more active participation of Indigenous Peoples in United Nations meetings, their safe participation must be ensured.

⁷⁴ Submission from the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

⁷⁵ Submission from the Assembly of First Nations.

⁷⁶ A/HRC/53/44, para. 31.

⁷⁷ See https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/assets/documentation/UN_Disability_Inclusion_Strategy_english.pdf.

⁷⁸ A/HRC/54/61, para. 133.

H. Visas

71. Many representatives of Indigenous Peoples encounter obstacles and delays in obtaining visas for travel to United Nations meetings because they do not have bank accounts or because they are unable to comply with other requirements. For instance, a number of recipients of grants from the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples participating in United Nations meetings as well as OHCHR Indigenous fellows participating in training and capacity-building activities have experienced delays in visa processing or did not receive visas. In addition, there have been instances of entry visas for countries hosting United Nations meetings being denied to Indigenous Peoples, even for those whose participation was fully sponsored by the United Nations.

VI. Good practices related to the participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations

72. A number of United Nations mechanisms and entities have made significant efforts to support the participation of Indigenous Peoples in relevant meetings and have adopted specific policies, platforms and mechanisms to ensure their participation. Some have established facilitated participation modalities and simpler accreditation criteria. Funding mechanisms to support Indigenous Peoples' participation have been created. United Nations mechanisms and entities have also made efforts to engage with Indigenous Peoples in their initiatives and projects, including by making documents accessible in Indigenous languages and establishing capacity-building and employment opportunities.

A. Positive impact of Indigenous Peoples' engagement and support of United Nations entities

73. Indigenous Peoples have played an important role in human rights advocacy. For example, as a result of their strong engagement in the process towards the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the 2030 Agenda refers to Indigenous Peoples six times.⁷⁹ Even in the absence of consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, Indigenous Peoples participate in the high-level political forum on sustainable development, which is the central United Nations platform to follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the major groups and other stakeholders coordination mechanism.⁸⁰

74. Indigenous Peoples have also been able to engage in the work of the human rights treaty bodies that monitor the implementation of core international human rights treaties in accordance with the procedures of the treaty bodies, regardless of their consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.⁸¹ Indigenous Peoples can submit alternative reports, participate in in-country reviews and sessions and present individual communications, including activating the early warning and urgent procedures of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.⁸²

75. According to a number of submissions received, Indigenous Peoples actively participate in the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation, and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) through the support of ECLAC.⁸³ At WIPO, Indigenous Peoples can participate in sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore,⁸⁴ and were able to take part at the Diplomatic Conference on Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge, held in May 2024,

⁷⁹ Submission from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

⁸⁰ Submission by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Intergovernmental Policy and Review Branch.

⁸¹ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies>.

⁸² See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cerd/about-early-warning-and-urgent-procedures>.

⁸³ Submission from ECLAC.

⁸⁴ See <https://www.wipo.int/tk/en/igc/>.

which concluded a draft international legal instrument relating to intellectual property, genetic resources, and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.⁸⁵

76. According to their submissions, FAO and UN-Women have supported the participation of Indigenous women in relevant processes, such as the 2018 Global Campaign for the Empowerment of Indigenous Women for Zero Hunger⁸⁶ and the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2024.⁸⁷

B. Specific policies, platforms and mechanisms for Indigenous Peoples participation

77. In the submissions received, a number of United Nations entities, including the Convention on Biological Diversity,⁸⁸ FAO,⁸⁹ the Green Climate Fund,⁹⁰ IFAD,⁹¹ the Pan American Health Organization,⁹² UNDP,⁹³ UNESCO,⁹⁴ UNEP,⁹⁵ the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁹⁶ and UN-Women,⁹⁷ reported on their development of policies, platforms or mechanisms enabling Indigenous Peoples' participation.

78. The primary mechanism for the participation of Indigenous Peoples at IFAD is the Indigenous Peoples' Forum,⁹⁸ which oversees the implementation of the IFAD policy on engagement with indigenous peoples. As the lead United Nations agency on the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032), UNESCO established a Global Task Force for Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages. Indigenous Peoples play a central role in the task force, ensuring that the strategies and actions are grounded in the real needs and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples.⁹⁹

79. With regard to the environment, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity established the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intersessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity to enhance the role and involvement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in achieving the objectives of the Convention.¹⁰⁰ The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change established the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform to contribute to the climate change-related processes and to strengthen the knowledge towards holistic and integrated climate policies and actions. The Green Climate Fund adopted a policy on Indigenous Peoples and supported the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group.¹⁰¹ At UNEP, Indigenous Peoples engage through

⁸⁵ Submission from WIPO.

⁸⁶ See https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/partnerships/docs/Concept_note_Make_them_visible_empower_them_eng.pdf.

⁸⁷ See <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/commission-on-the-status-of-women>.

⁸⁸ See <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/cffa/b5d7/285694916392f467a49d3407/wg8j-10-08-en.pdf>.

⁸⁹ See <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/9e6c8d97-971f-478e-8a1f-a7d3b22bbd16/content>.

⁹⁰ See <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/ip-policy.pdf>.

⁹¹ See <https://www.ifad.org/zh-TW/-/document/ifad-policy-on-engagement-with-indigenous-peoples>.

⁹² See <https://www.paho.org/en/documents/csp297-policy-ethnicity-and-health>.

⁹³ See https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/UNDP_Policy_of_Engagement_with_Indigenous_Peoples.pdf.

⁹⁴ See <https://www.unesco.org/en/indigenous-peoples/policy>.

⁹⁵ See https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11202/UNEP_Indigenous_Peoples_Policy_G%20uidance_endorsed_by_SMT_26_11_12.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

⁹⁶ See https://icipp.unfccc.int/ar?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwvIWzBhAlEiwAHHWgvQIcpswmgVLE%20c2f51FaB_QFEzP8zdDfRuwDZyeDOMwo0xnIIViTRNRoCTAkQAvD_BwE.

⁹⁷ See <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/12/strategy-for-inclusion-and-visibility-of-indigenous-women>.

⁹⁸ See <https://www.ifad.org/en/indigenous-peoples-forum>.

⁹⁹ See <https://www.unesco.org/en/decades/indigenous-languages/community/global-task-force>.

¹⁰⁰ See <https://www.cbd.int/convention/wg8j.shtml>.

¹⁰¹ See <https://www.greenclimate.fund/search?keywords=advisory+group>.

the Indigenous Peoples and their communities major group,¹⁰² which allows them to participate in all public UNEP meetings regardless of their consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

80. According to the submission from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Indigenous children were included in consultations for her reports to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. Indigenous children also participated in a series of events related to the presentation of her most recent report.¹⁰³ According to its submission, UN-Women facilitated a consultation that convened 58 Indigenous women from 21 countries to contribute to general recommendation No. 39 (2022) of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the rights of Indigenous women and girls in May 2022.

C. Simpler accreditation criteria

81. Some entities, including ECLAC, the Pan American Health Organization and UNEP, noted in their submissions that they do not have specific accreditation criteria for Indigenous Peoples to participate in their meetings. The overarching principle is to include Indigenous Peoples organizations that are familiar with and have experience working with relevant United Nations frameworks.

82. In their submissions, FAO, OHCHR, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO and UN-Women all referred to diversity criteria, encompassing various factors and attributes, including the participation of Indigenous youth, Indigenous persons with disabilities and Indigenous LGBTIQ+ persons, as well as gender and geographical balance, as important elements in identifying and selecting participants in order to ensure a diverse and inclusive meeting environment. Self-identification is an also a key principle considered. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) relies on Indigenous Peoples networks to select the members to represent them and to engage in discussions.¹⁰⁴

D. Availability of financial support for travel

83. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples, administered by OHCHR, is the most important mechanism supporting Indigenous Peoples' participation at the United Nations. In 2024, the Voluntary Fund will support the participation of 173 grantees. In addition, some United Nations entities, including ECLAC, noted that they financially support Indigenous Peoples' participation in United Nations meetings.¹⁰⁵ UNDP also regularly supports the travel and participation of Indigenous Peoples, including women and youth, to international meetings.¹⁰⁶ UNEP funds the participation of some Indigenous Peoples in the United Nations Environmental Assembly and meetings of its subsidiary bodies.¹⁰⁷ The WIPO secretariat manages a voluntary funding mechanism for the participation of Indigenous Peoples in meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore.¹⁰⁸

E. Engagement of Indigenous Peoples in initiatives and projects of United Nations entities

84. In their submissions, FAO, IFAD, ILO, the Pan American Health Organization, UNAIDS, UNEP, UNDP, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

¹⁰² See <https://www.unep.org/civil-society-engagement/major-groups-modalities/major-group-categories/indigenous-peoples-and>.

¹⁰³ See A/78/214 and A/HRC/55/58.

¹⁰⁴ Submission from UNAIDS.

¹⁰⁵ Submission from ECLAC.

¹⁰⁶ Submission from UNDP.

¹⁰⁷ Submission from UNEP.

¹⁰⁸ Submission from WIPO.

and UN-Women have reported engagement with Indigenous Peoples in the preparation or execution of their initiatives or projects. For instance, IFAD supports Indigenous Peoples' participation in determining priorities for developing its projects.¹⁰⁹ The World Health Organization (WHO) ensured the participation of Indigenous experts from the seven socio-cultural regions to contribute to the design of the research plan to develop a Global Plan of Action for Health of Indigenous Peoples.¹¹⁰

85. ILO partners with Indigenous Peoples' organizations in programmatic activities and development cooperation projects, including through their involvement in project design, implementation and evaluation.¹¹¹ The Pan American Health Organization worked with Indigenous Peoples in elaborating technical guidelines to address their health priorities from an intercultural approach.¹¹²

86. The UNDP Equator Initiative provides opportunities for Indigenous Peoples worldwide to address the challenges of land degradation, biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement in a socially equitable manner.¹¹³ UN-Habitat has engaged with Indigenous youth in the Young Gamechangers Initiative, through which Indigenous youth have actively participated in urban planning and development processes.¹¹⁴

87. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) engages with Indigenous Peoples on the ground through its community-based protection approach.¹¹⁵ Since 2016, UN-Women has undertaken to expand its coverage relating to Indigenous Women's rights beyond the Latin American and Caribbean region, where it has historically focused its efforts, to address the rights of African and Asian Indigenous women.¹¹⁶

F. Accessibility of documents and publications in Indigenous languages

88. OHCHR has promoted the translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into additional languages, including over 100 Indigenous languages,¹¹⁷ and recently made an open call to translate general recommendation No. 39 (2022) of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women into Indigenous languages. The general recommendation has been translated into six Indigenous languages so far.¹¹⁸ The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has promoted the translation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into Indigenous languages, which, thus far, has been translated into over 70 Indigenous languages.¹¹⁹

89. Several United Nations entities have tried to make United Nations documents available in Indigenous Peoples' languages. UNESCO, FAO and UN-Habitat noted in their submissions that they have translated materials into Indigenous languages for specific meetings. For instance, the UN-Habitat Youth 2030 Cities project has organized workshops for the localization of Sustainable Development Goals included their translation into Kichwa, the local Indigenous language in Ecuador, in January 2022.¹²⁰

¹⁰⁹ See https://www.ifad.org/documents/38711624/39417924/ip_policy_e.pdf/643fb659-7172-ec5c-ed20-6b29fc870745?t=1700581372967.

¹¹⁰ See WHA76.16, para. 2, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA76/A76_R16-en.pdf.

¹¹¹ Submission from ILO.

¹¹² Submission from the Pan American Health Organization.

¹¹³ Submission from UNDP.

¹¹⁴ Submission from UN-Habitat.

¹¹⁵ See <https://emergency.unhcr.org/protection/protection-mechanisms/community-based-protection-cbp>.

¹¹⁶ Submission from UN-Women.

¹¹⁷ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/universal-declaration-human-rights/about-universal-declaration-human-rights-translation-project>.

¹¹⁸ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-recommendation-no39-2022-rights-indigeneous>.

¹¹⁹ See <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/undrip-in-languages>.

¹²⁰ Submission from UN-Habitat.

G. Capacity-building and employment opportunities

90. FAO, OHCHR and WIPO have set up Indigenous Peoples' fellowship programmes.¹²¹ The OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme offers training and educational opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to strengthen their capacities as human rights defenders. Participants in the programme learn about international human rights standards, instruments, mechanisms and the work of the United Nations system in promoting and protecting human rights, with a special focus on Indigenous Peoples' rights. The Indigenous Fellowship Programme is organized annually in Geneva during the summer.¹²² Since its establishment in 1997, over 500 Indigenous fellows have participated in the programme.

91. Under the OHCHR Senior Indigenous Fellowship Programme, selected Indigenous individuals who have graduated from the Indigenous Fellowship Programme may be offered up to two years of on-the-job training at the OHCHR Headquarters or country offices.¹²³ In addition, OHCHR and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs hire Indigenous Junior Professional Officers. The Junior Professional Officers programme provides up to a two-year development pathway to a career at the United Nations.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

92. **Indigenous Peoples' participation at the United Nations benefits all stakeholders; it allows for the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' unique knowledge, lived experiences and cultural practices in discussions on solutions to current global crises, such as climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The participation of Indigenous Peoples helps to foster global partnerships and sustainable development. Enhanced participation by Indigenous Peoples also brings added legitimacy and sustainability to the decisions adopted by the United Nations.**

93. **Significant progress in the area of the Indigenous Peoples' rights has been made thanks to their participation at the United Nations, including the adoption of relevant international legal instruments, in particular the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the establishment of mechanisms specific to Indigenous Peoples. The establishment of Indigenous-specific platforms within some United Nations entities and the development of policies that facilitate Indigenous Peoples' participation in the work of United Nations entities represent additional positive measures in this regard.**

94. **A number of gaps in the ability of Indigenous Peoples to participate at the United Nations remain. Many persistent barriers are associated with the need for Indigenous Peoples' governance bodies, institutions and/or organizations to be established as NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in order to participate in meetings. While models of engagement that have been shown to be adequate and effective have been adopted by some United Nations mechanisms, such as those focused on Indigenous Peoples, other United Nations bodies should consider adopting a more flexible approach as regards to Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions participation that takes into account their needs as well as their traditional and longstanding organizational structures.**

95. **Some United Nations entities financially support Indigenous Peoples' participation in specific United Nations meetings, with the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples being the main financial mechanism to support Indigenous Peoples' participation. However, due to budget constraints and its limited mandate, the Voluntary Fund cannot satisfy existing demands for Indigenous Peoples' participation in all relevant United Nations meetings.**

¹²¹ The FAO fellowship programme is currently suspended due to budget constraints.

¹²² See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/indigenous-fellowship-programme>.

¹²³ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-us/fellowship-programmes/indigenous-fellowship-programme/call-applications-2020-senior-indigenous-fellow>.

96. **Solutions must be found or implemented to strengthen Indigenous Peoples' participation at the United Nations. With this aim in mind, Member States are encouraged to:**

(a) **Take measures to enhance the participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations, rooted in the principles affirmed in the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and relevant provisions of international law;**

(b) **Consider the establishment of an accreditation mechanism to allow for enhanced participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions at the United Nations from the seven sociocultural regions, based on broad, objective and transparent accreditation criteria, inclusive of the principle of self-identification;**

(c) **Consider increasing contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples and expanding its mandate to support Indigenous Peoples' participation in additional United Nations meetings of relevance to them;**

(d) **Take measures to end all acts of intimidation and reprisals against Indigenous Peoples engaging or seeking to engage with the United Nations; when acts of intimidation and reprisals take place, all allegations should be investigated, effective remedies provided and measures to prevent their recurrence adopted;**

(e) **Facilitate the timely issuance of visas for Indigenous Peoples wishing to participate in United Nations meetings.¹²⁴**

97. **The Human Rights Council should consider encouraging the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in sessions of the Council, following modalities established by the mechanisms focused on Indigenous Peoples, without requiring consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. In particular, the Human Rights Council may wish to consider ensuring that Indigenous Peoples representatives and institutions are allowed to participate in the interactive dialogues with the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples in relevant panel discussions.**

98. **All United Nations entities whose work impacts Indigenous Peoples should consider establishing structures, such as focal points, policies and platforms, to facilitate the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in their work.**

¹²⁴ Guidelines for States on the effective implementation of the right to participate in public affairs, para. 107, available at https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/PublicAffairs/GuidelinesRightParticipatePublicAffairs_web.pdf.