



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

**Side event for the
United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
on
Indigenous Peoples and Connectivity: Bridging the Digital Divide**

**28 April 2021, 8-9 am NY time / 2-3 pm Geneva time
Virtual event**

[Registration link here](#)

CONCEPT NOTE

Agenda 2030 recognizes that the spread of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies. Digital inclusion means ensuring the accessibility of ICTs for social and economic development, especially for people with specific needs, including Indigenous peoples.

During the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2003, Indigenous Peoples called for their full and effective participation in the Information Age on their own terms. Much progress has been made since then, but there is still a long way to go before this call is fully achieved. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the urgency of accelerating progress towards digital inclusion. It highlighted the importance of ICTs for continued functioning of societies, but has also brought to the fore the startling digital inequalities between and within countries, especially for indigenous communities. More than ever before, people the world over have needed to rely on ICTs, including for information, work, to conduct their business, access education, for health and other services, and to connect with each other safely. And yet, indigenous communities remain underserved, among those least likely to be connected to the Internet and often lack equal opportunities to acquire digital skills needed to make the most of ICTs.

This side event will highlight some examples of existing initiatives enhancing digital inclusion of Indigenous Peoples, including those increasing access and digital skills. It will also highlight lessons learned for replicating such initiatives by and within other indigenous communities with a view to accelerating closing of the digital divide. The focus will be on initiatives that entail Indigenous Peoples engaging with ICTs either independently, or in partnership with NGOs, private sector, governments, intergovernmental organizations, and other Indigenous Peoples.

SPEAKERS

Opening remarks	H.E. Ambassador Mr. Mitch Fifield, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations
	Ms. Daniela Bas, Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development, UN DESA
Panelists	Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, UNPFII Member and SDG Advocate of the UN Secretary-General
	Mr. Roberto Múkaró Borrero, Guainía Taíno Tribe, President, United Confederation of Taíno People
	Ms. Mikhaela Jade, Cabrogal Woman of the Dharug-speaking Nation, CEO and Founder Indigital
	Ms. Darrah Blackwater, Navajo Nation, University of Arizona
	Mr. Erick Huerta Velázquez, Coordinator General Adjunto, Redes por la Diversidad, Equidad y Sustentabilidad A.C.
Q and A	Time permitting
Moderation	Ursula Wynhoven, ITU Representative to the United Nations, New York

Speaker bios are at: <https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2021/Agenda/Session/432>