

### Questionnaire to the UN system agencies, funds and programmes and intergovernmental organizations

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established by Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 2000/22. The Permanent Forum is mandated to provide expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to ECOSOC and through the Council to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes; to raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues with the UN system; and prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues.

The Permanent Forum's report of the eighteenth session of 2019 includes several recommendations within its mandated areas, some of which are addressed to UN system agencies, funds and programmes (attached).

The report can be found at: <https://undocs.org/en/E/2019/43>

The Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch/secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues invites UN system agencies, funds and programmes and other inter-governmental organizations to complete the attached questionnaire on any action taken or planned in response to the Permanent Forum's recommendations and other relevant issues, including the system-wide action plan on rights of indigenous peoples/SWAP and the 2030 Development Agenda.

The responses will be compiled into two separate reports for the 2020 session of the Permanent Forum: (a) Update on the promotion and application of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and (b) System Wide Action Plan on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Implementation by the United Nations System.

All responses will be placed on the DESA/DISD website on Indigenous Peoples at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/>

*If you have any objections for your response to be made available on our website, please inform our office accordingly.*

Please submit your completed questionnaire by **28 November 2019** to:

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Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
Division for Inclusive Social Development  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
United Nations Headquarters  
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The nineteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will be held at United Nations Headquarters from **13 - 24 April 2020**.

### **Provisional Agenda**

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Discussion on the theme: “Peace, justice and strong institutions: the role of indigenous peoples in implementing Sustainable Development Goal 16”
4. Discussion on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum (economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights) with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.
5. Dialogues:
  - a. Dialogue with indigenous peoples;
  - b. Dialogue with Member States;
  - c. Dialogue with the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes;
  - d. Human rights dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
  - e. Regional dialogues;
  - f. Thematic dialogues.
6. Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues considered by the Economic and Social Council and emerging issues.
7. Provisional agenda for the twentieth session of the Permanent Forum.
8. Adoption of the report of the Permanent Forum on its nineteenth session.

## Questionnaire

**Please provide information on the following:**

### **A. Recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

UNFPA works in more than 150 countries and territories that are home to the vast majority of the world's indigenous population, as well as on the regional and global levels. UNFPA works on the rights of indigenous peoples within the context of its mandate, guided by the ICPD Programme of Action (1994), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015.

In its country level work, UNFPA emphasises the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous women and girls. It prioritises the recognition of indigenous rights in national constitutions and laws; their right to participate in decision making and policy processes; their right to be counted and have their problems adequately visualized in censuses, surveys and administrative data systems; their right to sexual and reproductive health free from coercion, discrimination and violence; and their ability to fully exercise their reproductive rights.

This year in light of The Nairobi Summit on ICPD25, which took place in Nairobi in November; this 2019 UNFPA submission will focus primarily on the outcomes of the Nairobi Summit for accelerating action for indigenous women and girls. In addition to providing information on this specific recommendation from the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNPFII, this submission will also address the other recommendations received by UNFPA, including supporting participation of indigenous peoples in policies and practices to support the SDGs; strengthening support on indigenous peoples and HIV/AIDS; and strengthening data on indigenous peoples. Finally, this submission includes illustrative examples of UNFPA's work at country level to promote the standards of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

#### **A. The Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 (recommendation para 88):**

Following up on the recommendation from the UNPFII 18th Session, UNFPA ensured a strong participation of indigenous peoples at the Nairobi Summit and secured a dedicated high level interactive session on "Progress for Indigenous Women and Girls".

Moreover, to bring visibility to the experiences and priorities of indigenous peoples to the Summit, ahead of the Summit, UNFPA gathered the views of over 90 indigenous peoples globally through an online survey. The survey results, presented at the Summit, highlighted the high levels of violence experienced by indigenous women; and widespread disrespect and abuse at the hands of health providers and authorities. Lack of respect and acceptance of traditional and indigenous knowledge and practices, and at times criminalization of these practices, was one of the biggest challenges indigenous people raised. Indigenous peoples prioritized acceptance for their culture and practices by the public, respect for their identity and knowledge, and accessing culturally appropriate sexual and reproductive health services.

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The dedicated inter-active session at the Summit on “Progress for Indigenous Women and Girls” brought together global representatives of indigenous women and leaders<sup>1</sup> in an effort to galvanize commitments from Governments and development actors to ensure full and equal access to SRHR and protection from GBV for indigenous women and girls. The panel discussed why progress on the ICPD agenda has been slow for indigenous women, the specific barriers they face, as well as critical accelerators needed.

The Session, which was highly interactive and well attended, achieved a clear directive for what is needed to accelerate progress for indigenous women and girls. This can be summarised as:

1. We need to make the "invisible" visible: disaggregated data is a major challenge, and when it comes to ethnic minorities, we need more data and more information.
2. Nothing about us without us: Real dialogue between policy makers and indigenous groups is a prerequisite for rights based development.
3. We need to support health care institutions to provide culturally appropriate sexual and reproductive health services
4. Stigma and discrimination are major obstacles to achieving the ICPD PoA. We need to work better at challenging norms and attitudes, including by reforming discriminatory laws, supporting awareness campaigns, and empowering caregivers to provide non-discriminatory care.

### **B. Supporting in-country dialogues that will feed into a global expert group meeting on indigenous peoples and HIV/AIDS (recommendation para 48)**

UNFPA, working together with UNAIDS, has drafted a proposal on how to address HIV and broader SRH needs of indigenous peoples. As a first step in taking this forward, UNFPA is working with a medical anthropologist to develop a methodology to facilitate in-country consultations on indigenous sexual and reproductive health and rights in 2020. These dialogues are planned for 2020.

### **C. Forced Sterilization (recommendation para 51):**

UNFPA has raised the recommendation on carrying out a study on forced sterilization among indigenous women with the *Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP)* and discussions are currently ongoing with the agency members of the HRP on how to take this recommendation forward. UNFPA has for many years been actively advocating for the elimination of forced sterilisation. These efforts include our 2014 joint UN statement on forced sterilisation, where the specific case of sterilization against ethnic minorities and indigenous women was highlighted. The statement provides guiding principles for the prevention and elimination of coercive sterilization.

### **D. Population Census and Data (recommendation from 17<sup>th</sup> UNPFII)**

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<sup>1</sup> Her Excellency Ms. Elena Ramos of Peru, Ms. Hanna Tetteh -Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine -Member of the UNPFII, Elvira Pablo Antonio –National Coordinator of Indigenous Women in Mexico, Lucy Mulenki -Executive Director of the Indigenous Information Network, Ruci Senikula of the Pacific Disability Forum and Tarcila Rivera Zea -Member of the UNPFII.

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Through UNFPA's unique role in the collection, analysis and use of population data for development, it has been promoting the greater disaggregation of data to strengthen the visibility of indigenous peoples.

For example, in Kenya this year, UNFPA, together with the Human Rights Adviser of the UN Country Team, supported the national statistics bureau of Kenya to create new tribal categories for indigenous peoples who in previous decades were either not counted at all or lumped together with larger tribes. Being recognized in the census provides these groups with a more basic dignity — their own identities, rather than tribes they do not belong to.

In Guatemala, UNFPA has provided technical assistance to the implementation of the latest population census (2017 – 2019). The results were released in September 2019, providing information about indigenous peoples in the areas of education, occupation, mobility, housing ownership, internet use and other data for policy making processes as well as monitoring and evaluation purposes.

At a global level, UNFPA together with civil society partners has advocated over the past years with the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) team to strengthen the disaggregation of data by ethnicity. The DHS is one of the two major global health and population surveys, collecting data in over 90 countries. This advocacy successfully resulted in the inclusion of a new category on ethnic minorities and religious minorities for the new round of DHS - DHS 8. This is a major advancement for strengthening the visibility of indigenous issues, and the extent to which they are able to exercise their right to sexual and reproductive health.

### **E. Country Examples**

- UNFPA in Argentina is implementing the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative on Gender Based Violence in the country – a multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030. UNFPA is working in the “Jujuy” province, and is ensuring the inclusion of indigenous perspectives at the workshops through inviting indigenous experts to take part. The Jujuy Minister of Human Development, and indigenous rights activist, Natalia Sarapura was part of the team.
- UNFPA in Burundi ensured that the BATWA community is represented in the Community Health Workers group (CHW). The CHW play a key role in disseminating information on SRH including family planning. Furthermore, through another initiative, 15 boys and 6 girls aged 15-35 from indigenous communities have engaged. They participate in peace clubs and benefit from a range of capacity building initiatives on social cohesion, reconciliation, conflict resolution and other initiatives planned in the project.
- The UNCT in China has identified ethnic minorities in its ongoing CCA as one of the groups most left-behind. With the support of Denmark, UNFPA China has launched a 3-year project titled “Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health among Vulnerable

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Populations in Qinghai and Shanxi Provinces in China (2019-2021)” in 2019. The project aims to increase availability and utilization of integrated, rights based, gender sensitive reproductive health services among vulnerable population including ethnic minorities in three counties of Yushu Tibetan Autonomic Prefecture of Qinghai province (e.g. Yushu County, Chengduo County and Naqian County) and Chenggu County of Shanxi province.

- The Inter-Agency Project for the Reduction of Maternal and Neonatal Infections in Indigenous Peoples in Ecuador led by UNFPA, UNICEF, PAHO and WFP, has established mechanisms for dialogue by which the Ministry of Health and Social Protection is advised and accompanied by the SISPI (Sistema de Salud Propia e Intercultural). This process looks at specific points of ILO Convention No. 169, such as the safeguarding of ancestral knowledge in the area of health. In addition, this experience works directly to raise awareness of the Convention among departmental and local health entities where the indigenous peoples of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, La Guajira, Cauca and Choco live.
- UNFPA in Guatemala has collaborated with the Prosecutor’s Office and the Office of the Ombudsman for Indigenous Women to organize a dialogue process involving indigenous authorities and women’s organizations on factors that limit indigenous women’s access to justice in cases of violence. As a result, a protocol has been developed to respond to gender-based violence, while capacity-building initiatives are ongoing to strengthen the identification and treatment of ethnic and linguistic diversity in the justice system.

Furthermore, UNFPA supports the AFEDOG (Asociación Femenina para el Desarrollo del Occidente de Guatemala) to provide life-skills education including comprehensive sexuality education –in the local language, improving the wellbeing of indigenous adolescent girls living in five rural communities of Totonicapán

In addition, UNFPA in Guatemala began a capacity building process for school-based comprehensive sexuality education with Asociación Acceso y Desarrollo in the municipality of Santa Cruz La Laguna, Sololá. Asociación Acceso y Desarrollo is an indigenous youth-led grassroots organization located in the Guatemalan Highlands. UNFPA has facilitated six training workshops for 53 teachers to strengthen their skills on comprehensive sexuality education as well as recreational methodologies in San Lucas Tolimán, San Antonio Palopó, Santa Catarina Palopó, Panajachel, San Andrés Semetabaj.

- UNFPA in Honduras has supported the elaboration of the Public Policy for the rights of indigenous and Afro-Honduran women, which has been promoted by the Network of Indigenous and Afro-Honduran women. The process for preparing this policy and its plan of action, has involved 500 indigenous women and authorities such as the Secretariat of Human Rights who acts as its rector.

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- UNFPA in Mexico has promoted a project to sensitize and actively involve adolescents and young people in the fulfilment of the 2030 SDG Agenda. To achieve this, UNFPA developed the “Unidas crecemos” project to strengthen the public participation of adolescent girls, through the creation of clubs in public community spaces, where they are given training workshops on human rights, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, violence prevention, and life skills development. This model, originally planned for urban populations, was reviewed and adapted jointly with the Commission for the Development of Indigenous Communities to respond to and benefit indigenous populations.

Furthermore, as part of UNFPA’s work on health, UNFPA in Mexico has developed an initiative with private sector partners (McArthur / Johnson & Johnson Foundation) to contribute to promoting the exercise of reproductive rights and reducing maternal and perinatal morbidity and mortality through universal access of women to quality and respectful midwifery services with an intercultural approach. The project has contributed to the improvement of healthcare in indigenous communities, particularly in the States of Morelos, Oaxaca, Guerrero, Michoacán, San Luis Potosí, and Hidalgo. Moreover, UNFPA in Mexico has also established a youth advisory group to advise on the development and implementation of the UNFPA Country Program. Indigenous youth and youth of African Descent are included in this advisory group to ensure interculturality is mainstreamed into all of UNFPA’s actions.

- In Nicaragua, UNFPA takes part in an inter-agency group promoting joint actions for policy on Gender, Human Rights and Inter-culturality. The group aims to scale up its work with indigenous peoples and people of African Descent in 2020. UNFPA’s own multiyear country programme identifies ethnic and people of African Descent as priority groups. In this regard, 8 health regions with higher indigenous populations and populations of people of African Descent are being targeted with capacity development initiatives.