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Mr. Liu Zhenmin,
Under-Secretary-General
Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
The United Nations
Room S-2922, UN Secretariat Building
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Liu Zhenmin,

Thank you for your letter dated October 6, 2021 inviting the World Bank to contribute to the twenty-first session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), which will be held from April 25 to May 6, 2022. We look forward to participating in the various sessions, side events, and other discussions on the Forum's agenda.

The World Bank supports Indigenous peoples' voice, inclusion, and well-being in our client countries. The Bank does this through supporting policy dialogue and investment lending, technical assistance, and the generation of knowledge and analytics. We have direct dialogue with Indigenous peoples in various countries and regions of the world to advance mutual understanding and partnership on critical issues, such as COVID-19, climate change, development with identity, and building back more green, resilient, and inclusive societies. This upstream engagement has led to an increase in Indigenous peoples' visibility and voice within the Bank's country analytics and programming, and as a result, greater inclusion within the policy dialogue and investments supported by the Bank.

The primary instrument through which the World Bank ensures the protection and promotion of Indigenous peoples are included and their concerns address is the *Environmental and Social Standard 7 ([ESS7](#)): Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African*

Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities. ESS7 is currently activated in about one third of the Bank's active investment projects covering more than 50 countries. In these projects, specific measures have been put in place to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts while delivering culturally appropriate benefits in line with Indigenous Peoples' preferences and priorities, and as appropriate, taking into account their Free, Prior, and Informed Consent.

As an example of the projects the World Bank finances, I am delighted to inform you of the recently approved Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) Program to support community-led climate action in Kenya. Indigenous peoples or traditionally marginalized groups are among the key beneficiaries. This Program builds on the existing portfolio of investment and policy reform projects that have been designed to specifically benefit Indigenous Peoples. Other examples of such operations are already ongoing in Latin America, East and South Asia, and Africa.

Climate change is a priority area where the Bank has worked closely with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) given the disproportionate impacts they face as well as their critical role as stewards of the world's forests and biodiversity. In the last year, the Bank has approved direct financing for IPLC and forestry management through the dedicated grant mechanism in Guatemala and the Republic of Congo.

Finally, with the aim of informing global approaches to building more green, resilient, and inclusive societies, over the past year we have initiated analytical work with Indigenous organizations to identify key tenets for their resilience to external shocks. This work builds on the lessons that have been drawn from the experience of Indigenous peoples in the face of COVID-19 and amid a changing climate.

Through partnerships with the United Nations, Governments, civil society organizations, and Indigenous peoples, the World Bank will continue to leverage its work at global, regional, and national levels in support of Indigenous peoples' inclusion, visibility, and well-being. Over the past year, the Bank has also started to reengage within the UN Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, and we will continue to contribute actively through that forum.

We look forward to participating actively in the 2022 UNPFII where we hope our work can contribute to advance the objectives of the Forum.

Sincerely,



Louise Cord
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Annex 1:**Q&A:****World Bank support for Indigenous Peoples' voice, inclusion & well-being****1. How does the World Bank work with Indigenous Peoples?**

The World Bank supports Indigenous peoples' voice, inclusion, and well-being through two means. First off, with our client countries, we promote their visibility and awareness of their key challenges and priorities through upstream analytics, country policy dialogue, and technical assistance. As requested by client governments, we also support financing for their priority policy reforms or investments. In addition, when Indigenous peoples are present within the project areas where we support investments, and meet the criteria established within our Environmental and Social Framework, the Bank ensures that their inclusion in project benefits is promoted and that any potential adverse impacts are avoided or mitigated. Secondly, the World Bank has advanced direct dialogue with Indigenous peoples' representatives and organizations at national, regional, and global levels. We do this with the aim of advancing mutual understanding and partnership on critical issues such as climate change, resilience, and development with identity. This direct engagement informs the Bank's dialogue with client governments and promotes financing in line with Indigenous peoples' aspirations and priorities.

2. Beyond the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), how is the World Bank proactively ensuring the visibility, voice and well-being of Indigenous Peoples?

Beyond the ESF, over the past years, the World Bank has been strengthening its upstream inclusion in country programming documents, direct dialogue, and financing for Indigenous peoples' priorities, for which we provide some examples here.

At a global level, the Bank holds an ongoing dialogue with the Inclusive Forum for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP), comprised of IP representatives from ECA, SAR, EAP, AFR and LCR. This space serves for cross-learning, building trust, and creates a bridge for the Bank with Regional IP organizations. The Bank has also started to reengage more actively with the UN Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Bank has been engaging in an ongoing dialogue with Indigenous organizations represented through the Abya Yala Indigenous Forum (FIAY) since 2013. This dialogue has contributed to the design of the ESF, produced knowledge products and informed numerous country programming processes. It has also greatly enhanced mutual trust and understanding, improved efficiencies and effectiveness in application of ESS7 and

OP 4.10, and contributed to stand-alone policy reforms, technical assistance (TA) and investments with Indigenous peoples in the region. In Nepal the Bank is engaging in a direct dialogue with Indigenous women, and in Russia, the Bank is supporting the advance of knowledge on Indigenous peoples in several priority areas. Other examples can also be drawn from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

3. Beyond the ESF, does the Bank lend to Indigenous peoples or to countries to finance Indigenous peoples' priorities?

Whereas the Bank only lends to client governments, with enhanced visibility of Indigenous peoples in the Bank's dialogue with countries, there has been an increase in demand from countries to invest in and with Indigenous peoples. Some recent examples include, most recently, the World Bank approval of the Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) Program to support community-led climate action in Kenya, where Indigenous peoples or traditionally marginalized groups figure highly among beneficiaries. Last November, the World Bank ensured proactive approaches to ensure Indigenous peoples voice and inclusion in the Emergency Response Loans to Eta and Iota in Honduras and Nicaragua after the devastating impacts of these hurricanes. The World Bank continues to support the implementation of two investment projects co-designed with Indigenous peoples for \$80m in Panama (2018) and \$40m in Ecuador (2020). In East Asia, the Bank is supporting Community Driven Development (CDD) loans targeting ethnic minority communities in Vietnam, Lao PDR, and the Philippines. Policy lending for COVID-19 response and recovery in Guatemala and Panama supported legal reforms proposed by Indigenous peoples for almost a decade. Technical assistance is underway in India to support improved service delivery in tribal areas, and similar support is underway in Kenya.

4. Does the World Bank mobilize resources directly to Indigenous Peoples?

Trust funds supporting climate change and reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD+) continue to open a unique space for direct engagement and investments with IPs in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM) Trust Fund, financed under the Forest Investment Program (FIP), has mobilized \$80m for Recipient Executed Trust Funds (RETFs) designed and led directly by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in 12 countries. This fund supports sustainable IPLC forest-use practices, promotes their sharing and elevation to the global policy arena, and fosters IPLCs' capacity to engage in and contribute to local, national, and international REDD+ dialogue and actions. Over the past year, two new DGMs were approved in Guatemala and the Republic of Congo. Elsewhere, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) is supporting \$15m to build IPLCs' capacity and support their meaningful participation in REDD+ and climate change dialogues within their countries, with a recent launch of studies on IPLC land tenure and the impact on climate change results in several countries. Finally, the Enhancing Access to Benefits while Lowering Emissions (EnABLE) Trust Fund, with an initial amount of \$24.5m is

contributing to the inclusion of IPLCs and other marginalized peoples' participation in the benefits generated from Emission Reduction Programs (ERPs). Other trust funds administered by the Bank, such as the Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF), have also financed Indigenous peoples' priorities directly.

5. How has the World Bank supported Indigenous People in the face of COVID-19?

Over the past two years the World Bank has leveraged ongoing partnerships with Indigenous organizations to prepare assessments of impacts and proposals for recovery in 11 countries in Latin America and East Asia. These reports, together with our global and regional dialogues with Indigenous leaders, directly informed our response and recovery projects, by informing ESS7 application, and facilitating the implementation of our commitment to protect the poor and most vulnerable in our COVID-19 response. In response to Indigenous peoples' priorities for building back more resilient and inclusive societies, the Bank financed a pilot study on the key drivers for Indigenous peoples' resilience both to the pandemic and climate change in Central America, which is now being scaled up to Africa, Latin America, and South Asia with the support of the Human Rights Inclusion and Empowerment Trust Fund (HRIETF).