

THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE

Press release

Indigenous peoples' rights to lands, territories and resources at the centre of UN annual forum

UNITED NATIONS, 13 April 2018 – More than 1,000 indigenous participants from all over the world will be at United Nations Headquarters from 16 to 27 April to participate in the seventeenth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. This year's session is focused on indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands, territories and natural resources.

"Lands and resources are vitally important to indigenous peoples, not just as sources of income but as the sources of our identities and life," said Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine, the Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. "Indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands and resources are crucial to tackling global challenges such as climate change and loss of biodiversity," she emphasized. "Effective implementation of those rights through laws, policies and programmes is the demand of indigenous peoples across the globe."

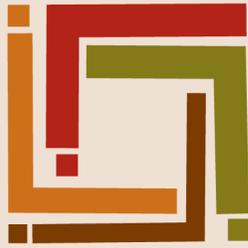
Besides the main theme, the Permanent Forum will also discuss the upcoming International Year of Indigenous Languages (2019), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the rights of indigenous women and children. Human rights and the issues faced by indigenous human rights defenders will feature prominently in the dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 18 April.

The session will open on Monday, 16 April, at 11 a.m. in the General Assembly Hall, with a cultural performance by 'Saina' Ekaterina Savvinova from the Sakha Republic in the Russian Federation and a ceremonial welcome by the Chief of the Onondaga Nation, Tadodaho Sidney Hill. Remarks are expected by the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Miroslav Lajčák; the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, Her Excellency Inga Rhonda King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines); the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, His Excellency Evo Morales Ayma; the Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Ms. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine; and Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, Mr. Elliott Harris, delivering a message of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Liu Zhenmin.

Side events

Over 100 side events are scheduled to take place during the two-week session, organized by indigenous peoples' organizations, UN Member States, UN entities, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders. The full list of side events will be published at <https://bit.ly/UNPFI17>.





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Cultural event

A cultural event on Tuesday, 17 April, starting at 6:30 p.m. in the Visitors Lobby of the United Nations will feature performances by Raye Zaragoza, a United States singer-songwriter and indigenous rights activist whose protest song "In The River," in response to the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North Dakota, garnered half a million listens, national media coverage, and a Global Music Award; and by 'Saina' Ekaterina Savvinova from the Russian Federation, who sings Evenk, Sakha (Yakut), Chukchi, Even and Yukaghir songs dedicated to important events, rituals and everyday chores of Siberian indigenous peoples. There will also be traditional music of the Andes played by Los Hijos del Sol and Kaylla.

Background

Indigenous peoples make up less than 6 per cent of the world's population, but account for 15 per cent of the poorest. They live across some 90 countries, represent 5,000 different cultures and speak an overwhelming majority of the world's estimated 6,700 languages.

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2000. The Forum provides expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the UN System through ECOSOC; raises awareness and promotes the integration and coordination of relevant activities within the UN System; and disseminates information on indigenous issues.

The Permanent Forum is comprised of 16 independent experts, functioning in their personal capacity. ECOSOC appoints the members, eight of whom are nominated by governments and eight by indigenous peoples' organizations from the different regions of the world. The Forum has gained increasing recognition and impact as the global platform for dialogue, cooperation and concrete action on indigenous peoples, with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the fundamental framework.

Press conferences are scheduled on **16 April** at 1:15 p.m., and on **19 April** at 11:00 a.m. in room S-237 at United Nations Headquarters. The press conferences and all official sessions (not side events) will be **webcast live** at webtv.un.org.

Journalists without United Nations press accreditation should seek accreditation through the Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit: www.un.org/en/media/accreditation or +1 212-963-6934.

Indigenous Media Zone: From 16 to 20 April, the Indigenous Media Zone provides a space for indigenous community media to cover the Permanent Forum session. It is located in the UNCA Room on the 3rd floor of the UN Secretariat building. The programme is available at <http://bit.ly/2qr2dZk>

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For more information on the seventeenth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, please see <https://bit.ly/UNPFII17>.

Published by the UN Department of Public Information

