

THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

COVID-19 and Indigenous Peoples' Resilience

Virtual commemoration on 10 August 2020 (9-11 am EST/NY time)

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, celebrated around the world on 9 August, marks the date of the inaugural session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations¹. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) is organizing a webinar on Monday, 10 August to commemorate the International Day, bringing together indigenous peoples' organizations, Member States, UN entities, civil society, and the general public.

Indigenous Peoples

There are over 476 million indigenous peoples living in 90 countries across the world, accounting for 6.2 per cent of the global population². Indigenous peoples are the holders of unique cultures, traditions and knowledge systems and have a special relationship with their lands and hold diverse concepts of development based on their own worldviews and priorities.

COVID-19 and indigenous peoples' resilience

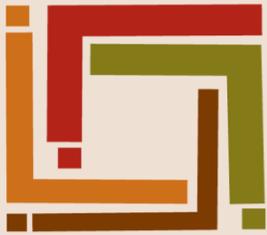
COVID-19 presents a new threat to the health and survival of indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples face numerous challenges, such as little or poor access to sanitation, lack of clean water, inadequate medical services, widespread stigma and discrimination, as well as land grabbing and encroachment on their lands. From the very outset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, indigenous peoples have been seeking their own solutions to the pandemic – as they have for centuries. They are taking action and drawing on traditional knowledge and practices, such as voluntary isolation in the Amazon, and sealing off their territories, like the Karen people of Thailand who have revived their ancient ritual of “Kroh Yee” (village closure) in efforts to fight the spread of COVID-19.

Indigenous peoples' practices have served as inspiration in combatting the pandemic, and their collective traditions provide a strong support system within their communities. They are also implementing preventive and protective measures – providing key messages and launching media campaigns in indigenous languages. The commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples seeks to promote these good practices as examples that can be emulated throughout the world.

¹ A/RES/49/214.

² “Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169: Towards an inclusive, sustainable and just future”, International Labour Organization (February 2020).





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International Day - 9 August 2020

The theme of the 2020 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is *COVID-19 and indigenous peoples' resilience*. The webinar will feature presentations on the impact of the pandemic on indigenous peoples. Panelists will share innovative ways indigenous peoples continue demonstrating resilience and strength in the face of the pandemic while confronting grave threats to their survival. The aim is to highlight how the preservation and promotion of indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and practices can be leveraged more fully during this pandemic to build back stronger.

Format

The commemoration will be organized virtually this year. It will commence with a video message from the Secretary-General, followed by statements and presentations from UN-DESA's Under-Secretary-General, Indigenous Representatives, Member States, and the UN system on the impact and responses to the pandemic.

When: Monday, 10 August 2020 from 9 am to 11 am Eastern Standard Time (New York time).

Where: The webinar will take place online. Details will be posted on the DESA/DISD/IPDB/SPFII web site and social media.

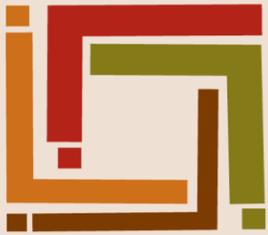
Who: Indigenous Peoples, Member States, UN agencies, funds and programmes, civil society and the general public are invited to participate.

Viewers are encouraged to post questions or comments through the @UN4Indigenous Twitter account and the chat function of the webinar.

Background Information

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is the normative framework to achieve the rights of indigenous peoples. It elaborates the right of indigenous peoples to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and that States shall take all necessary steps to realize this right (Article 24.2). The Declaration emphasizes the right of indigenous peoples to their traditional medicines and their health practices, and the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services (Article 24). It also reiterates that indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop their own priorities and strategies for development, and to be actively involved in developing, determining and implementing health and other socio-economic programmes affecting them (Article 23).

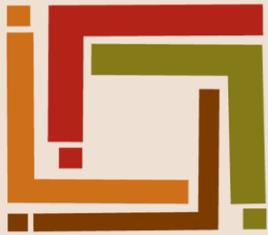




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Resources

- Dedicated DESA web page on COVID-19 and indigenous peoples:
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/covid-19.html>
- Statement by the Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII): https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenous-peoples-es/wp-content/uploads/sites/34/2020/04/UNPFII-Chair-statement_COVID19.pdf
- Indigenous peoples and the COVID-19 pandemic: Considerations, Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch, Division for Inclusive Social Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA): https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2020/04/COVID19_IP_considerations.pdf
- The Impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous Peoples, UN/Department of Economic and Social Affairs Policy Brief #70: https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/PB_70.pdf
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP): https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

