

# **UNPFII Regional Dialogues 2020-2021**

## **Summaries**

### **Pacific Region**

12 and 14 January 2021

#### **Violence against Women and Children**

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted and worsened the pre-existing discriminatory conditions, particularly as violence against women and children has increased due to quarantine. There are many forms of violence (structural, economic, environmental, etc.) against indigenous women and children, which are often unreported due to lack of resources, fear of state institutions, threat of child removal and its subsequent economic and social impacts. The lack of disaggregated data by ethnicity is constant and must be addressed by governments. Indigenous children and youth face disproportionately larger mental health challenges, with higher rates of suicided compounded by poverty, discrimination and racism, and incarceration. Indigenous peoples advocate for the end of impunity for the indigenous survivors of violence. A call for justice for indigenous women and children means no woman, child or youth will be excluded or marginalized as stated in SDG 16. Indigenous people expressed the opportunity to build back better in a post-COVID-19 world with the full and active participation of women and children.

#### **Incarceration and Deaths in Custody**

Indigenous peoples are disproportionately incarcerated, while also being exposed to inhuman conditions upon detention. Indigenous peoples raised grave concern for the discriminatory identifications of incarceration through racial profiling, that result in the detention of indigenous peoples for crimes they did not commit. Although legally the governments must place indigenous children with the next of kin, there is no evidence that this is being implemented appropriately. Indigenous peoples called for the full implementation of the United Nations Convention against Torture, and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination should be manifested in the form of an indigenous-led model of tribal jurisdictions of criminal justice and incarceration. State and government institutions must cede power to indigenous communities and that has to come with resourcing and allow indigenous communities to have autonomy over decision-making.

#### **Self-Determination and Self-Governance**

The right to self-determination and self-governance must be implemented as recognized in Article 3 and Article 4 of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The priority issues expressed by indigenous peoples are identified as: i) overarching constitutional transformation; ii) self-determination underpinned by participation in decision-making and free, prior, and informed consent; iii) lands, territories and resources with focus on climate change; iv) cultural rights; v) equality and non-discrimination; and vi) practical implementation of UNDRIP and technical assistance. Another recommendation provided was the need for greater indigenous representation in state government. The appointment of an Indigenous Rights Commissioner was raised as a matter of urgency to enact national action plans. Further, indigenous people highlighted the need for greater data collection on the realistic implementation and adherence to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

#### **Climate Change and Land Issues**

Indigenous peoples expressed the need of active and meaningful participation in the decision-making processes in order to exercise their right to development. Indigenous peoples are deeply and disproportionately affected by climate change. The protection of indigenous land rights and self-determination is a top priority. Indigenous people continue to advocate for the guarantee of their participation in decisions affecting their lands and resources, but the lack the capacity to do so. To build climate change resilience, it should be recognized that indigenous traditional knowledge systems should be utilized. Indigenous peoples recommended greater involvement of indigenous peoples in climate change conventions and organizations such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. There remains a great need for reliable and inclusively informed data in order to build sustainable societies, and indigenous sciences, technology and traditional knowledge must be a pillar of climate change implementation.

***Possible recommendation:*** By 2025 Member States should increase programs and funding to UN agencies, funds and programmes operating in the Pacific to ensure more sustained engagement with Indigenous Peoples in the region to promote self-determination and greater realisation of the UNDRIP. This support should ensure that violence against Indigenous women and children is addressed, consistent with international human rights law and the UNDRP.

## **Asia Region**

18 and 19 January 2021

### **Rights to lands, territories and resources**

Recognition of indigenous peoples' rights to their lands, territories and resources remains a constant priority issue for indigenous peoples in Asia. Encroachment on their lands continues in many countries of the region, fueled by natural resource extraction, large infrastructure projects and large-scale agriculture. Conservation efforts that have frequently led to the displacement of indigenous peoples from their territories and loss of their livelihoods. The Convention on Biological diversity proposal demonstrates the need to develop human rights-based conservation model where indigenous peoples are actively involved partners. It is also important to envision legal pluralism that facilitates the incorporation of customary law into national legislation.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected indigenous peoples in Asia. Of particular concern are indigenous children who already had inadequate access to education that lost all access to education. Many indigenous peoples are migrant workers who were far from their home communities when governments issued lockdowns and other restrictions on travel. Thus, isolated from their communities they could not utilize their own traditional knowledge and methods to adapt and address to the pandemic. Indigenous peoples in the region expressed concerns that post pandemic recovery efforts may include activities such as increased natural resource extraction that will be detrimental to indigenous peoples. To avoid this, indigenous peoples must be included in decision making at all levels.

### **Conflict resolution and peacebuilding**

Indigenous peoples expressed deep concerns with ongoing militarization of their territories in several countries in Asia. A varying number of legislative and administrative measures have been taken that facilitate centralization of power and increased resource extraction by corporations. Indigenous peoples identified concerns of legislative and executive order that weaken environmental protections, escalating

militarization, human rights and right to participation. Indigenous peoples call for recognition and protection of their self-rule government and customary justice system to establish justice and the rule of law for a sustainable peace and inclusive development. Where institutions exist that promote, protect and advance indigenous peoples rights and socio-economic development, it was identified that these must be strengthened.

### **Indigenous peoples and a reformed UN development system**

The Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) provide reports from Member States on the progress made towards the SDGs. The VNRs are an opportunity for indigenous peoples to engage in the SDG related work. Indigenous peoples expressed the lack of consultations and limited opportunities for indigenous peoples to participate UN and SDG processes. The full and active inclusion and participation with indigenous peoples when preparing these recommendations and processes. The Permanent Forum welcomes the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination's Call to Action on Indigenous Peoples<sup>1</sup> to revitalize the System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP). Indigenous peoples request that UN system entities inform indigenous peoples and member states of action taken to implement the Call to Action at future sessions of the Forum.

**Possible recommendation:** Resident Coordinators are encouraged to engage effectively with indigenous peoples at the country level to support their participation and to support the establishment of specific consultation mechanisms at the country level, such as inter-agency groups. UNDESA and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues should support Resident Coordinators Offices in this regard.

## **North American Region** 9 and 11 March 2021

### **COVID-19 and Indigenous Peoples**

COVID-19 has exacerbated the inequalities and marginalization experienced by indigenous peoples. Canada seeks to empower indigenous peoples in their decision-making processes using traditional knowledge, therefore, in December 2020, Canada introduced legislation to implement UNDRIP. In the United States, the rate of infections for indigenous peoples living on reservations is four times higher, indigenous peoples have higher mortality rates, and they are more likely to be hospitalized than non-indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples in the United States often live-in close communities and multi-generational homes making them more vulnerable to contracting and transmitting COVID-19 with limited healthcare resources available.

**Possible recommendations:** 1. Indigenous peoples' groups who are not formally recognized by the US government to work with the UNPFII to contribute information and data on COVID-19 to address any policy or implementation gaps. This information, therefore, will be utilized to expand the voices of indigenous peoples to create holistic solutions. Indigenous peoples not formally recognized by the United States to work in collaboration with the Permanent Forum to generate and provide sources of data to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/CEB-Call-to-Action-Indigenous-2020-WEB%20%281%29.pdf>

allow for more accurate assessment of the COVID-19 response and resources. The Forum also urges States to generate statistics disaggregated by indigenous identity and self-identification.

2. The United Nations must assist the States in generating statistics and analysis to address the lack of regional and provincial protocols during COVID-19 for indigenous peoples, to provide a comprehensive and accurate overview of implementation indicators and gaps, particularly regarding maternal health.

3. The Forum to consult with Member States and indigenous peoples to generate data and statistics on the impact of COVID-19 on use of threatened indigenous languages.

### **Implementation of UNDRIP: Towards a full and meaningful participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations**

The right to participate in decision-making is threaded throughout UNDRIP. In the Paris Agreement, indigenous peoples achieved for first time in an internationally binding convention, the recognition and rights of indigenous peoples, traditional knowledge and practices and their role in climate change mitigation. COVID-19 has highlighted the failure of countries' implementation of indigenous peoples' participation and decision-making. According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur report (A/75/185), only two countries have reported the involvement of indigenous peoples in decision-making processes related to the COVID-19 response.

At the core, indigenous peoples are governments and nations, confirmed by treaties. They have been self-governing from time immemorial. The inherent challenge in this is simultaneously recognizing the sovereignty of States and indigenous peoples: How do both co-exist? Indigenous nations and territories through self-determination and self-governance are solely responsible for the election of their respective officials and leaders — any issues on such questions will ultimately be resolved internally. Indigenous peoples are tasked with the realization of right to self-determination and governance as affirmed by the United Nations General Assembly and the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

### **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has been implicated in many of the disappearances, resulting in impunity. A positive relationship must be built with the RCMP. Birth Alert is forcibly removing indigenous children from their mothers at birth and integrated into mainstream society. The primary age group of indigenous victims of human trafficking are between 8 to 25 years old. Due to discrimination and lack of resources, women and girls are forced to relocate off the reservations. The Canadian Government has acknowledged the existence of systematic racism in Canada, especially regarding indigenous peoples through the work with numerous partners and families of victims and survivors to advance the issue of MMIWG. There remains much work to be done.

**Possible recommendations:** 1. The Forum in consultation with Member States and indigenous peoples to provide sources of data and statistics to investigate the human trafficking occurrences between the Mexico-US-Canada border areas. The Forum urges the Member States of Mexico-US-Canada to work collaboratively and with the full participation of indigenous peoples to launch investigations into multi-jurisdictional human trafficking violations.

2. UNPFII to build on its past work regarding MMIWG and conduct a cross-border study or interactive dialogue in that regard to bring visibility and accountability to the issue.

3. Raise with Member States, to release and share data on MMIWG to be freely accessed by indigenous peoples.

### **United Nations International Decade of Indigenous Languages**

The International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL) burgeoned from the ubiquitous concern on the status of indigenous languages within the seven socio-cultural regions. The governing structure for organization of the IDIL is comprised of five components: 1) steering committee of 19 members who will hold regular meetings; 2) advisory group; 3) ad hoc groups and thematic groups and any other ad hoc committees; 4) open multi stakeholders consultative meeting every three years; 5) permanent observers including IPOs and network of UN special rapporteurs, academic institutes. There are three phases: collecting data and holding consultations, advanced consultations and drafting process. The endorsement will take place at 21st Permanent Forum Session in 2022. The rotational system occurs every three years in which leadership for each region is changed. The following guiding questions are to be considered: 1) How do we design a mission statement that helps us reach goals for 2032?; 2) What do we want to see in each region in 2032 regarding indigenous languages; 3) What level of fluency do we want to see globally in 2032? Indigenous peoples should declare their indigenous languages as official language in their respective territory, ideally through the family unit.

**Possible recommendation:** The Forum, building upon Recommendation from Session 02 Para. 109, to investigate the implementation of indigenous languages in academia through a formal report.

## **Arctic Region**

23 and 31 March 2021

### **A Shared Ocean**

Indigenous peoples emphasized the importance of maintaining and protecting shared oceans that are integral to hunting, fishing, culture, and travel. The protection must come in the form of indigenous-led management regimes exercising Article 25 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Pikialasorsuaq Commission of the Inuit Circumpolar Council that considered the shared sea between Greenland and Canada has made three main recommendations, calling for an Inuit led management regime, the establishment of a management zone and the establishment of a free travel zone. Cross-border shared ocean management, protection, and preservation must be collaborative between indigenous peoples and states. Such an Inuit-led management regime can serve as a model for other cross border areas worldwide.

### **Marine Resource Management and Biodiversity**

Indigenous peoples must be integral to the decision-making processes and implementation of law of sustainable practices regarding marine resources and biodiversity. There is a need for greater inclusion and cooperation of all members of the community when implementing changes with a greater emphasis on consequences for destructive practices. It is particularly important to increase awareness and education of biodiversity amongst indigenous youth and ensure intergenerational and intercommunal knowledge transmission.

**Possible recommendation:** As a measure to increase participation, indigenous peoples recommended the establishment of indigenous youth biodiversity and climate ambassadors to formulate concrete actions to move forward informed by the perspective of indigenous youth regarding preservation and protection of marine resources and biodiversity.

## **Unity and Cultural Integrity**

A challenge facing indigenous peoples is the lack of formal institutions and structures to promote collaboration and cooperation of indigenous peoples across state borders. The protection and promotion of indigenous traditional knowledge is a primary pillar of cultural integrity, particularly facing the challenges of climate change. The inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the response to climate change will result in a more comprehensive and effective strategy especially in the Arctic. Indigenous peoples expressed concern on the discernible gap between law and implementation regarding indigenous language education.

## **Conflicts on Indigenous Lands and Territories Under the Peace & Security Agenda**

Indigenous peoples identified the multifarious issues facing their land and territories under the peace and security agenda. Climate change and natural resource extraction are a particular threat to indigenous peoples lands and territories. Conservation that seeks to separate humans from the environment is also a threat to indigenous peoples and has sometimes been referred to as green colonialism. Some indigenous peoples are separated by state borders and the individual, collective, and land rights are being upheld in uneven degrees in different countries. When encroachment on indigenous lands happens, indigenous peoples often do not have the resources to pursue legal action, especially when it occurs transnationally. It is worth noting that although indigenous peoples participation has been an overwhelmingly positive experience, and that indigenous peoples have much to offer for the maintenance of peace and security, indigenous peoples have not engaged with the Peacebuilding Commission or the Security Council.

## **Indigenous Peoples' Institutions**

Transnational institutions provide greater collaboration and effective action, as seen through the Inuit Circumpolar Council. There needs to be constant dialogue between the high level of indigenous institutions and the highest level of government institutions to move forward. Indigenous institutions transcend national borders for the causes of i) management of resources; ii) issues of uneven national treatment and human rights by federal governments; and iii) provide foundation for international treaties. Where indigenous institutions already exist, such as the Sámi Parliaments, the institutions must be strengthened and supported in their holistic work on addressing the needs of indigenous peoples. There are various examples of Sámi organizations and institutions that work across borders to address common issues, including language revitalization, higher education and political affairs. Of great importance is that these institutions are recognized and respected by federal governments.

**27 – 29 October 2020**

## **Inequalities and the COVID-19 pandemic**

During the past decade, the rights of indigenous peoples have been recognized in constitutions and domestic legislation in various countries of the region. However, there are still critical gaps in the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples as enshrined in these constitutions and in international human rights instruments and specific instruments such as ILO's Convention 169 (1989) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).

Indigenous peoples in the region continue confronting structural barriers that limit their full social and economic inclusion. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the preexisting inequalities of access to basic services, especially access to water and basic sanitation; barriers in access to information; the lack of cultural appropriated access to health services and education. Additionally, indigenous peoples have limited access to social protection due to patterns of marginalization, discrimination and exclusion. Indigenous women, children and elderly have experienced the more severely effects of the pandemic. The declarations of states of emergency in various countries of the region have been used to suppress voices of resistance of peoples. In the Amazon region, indigenous peoples have confronted the continue exploitation of resources in their lands and territories. Disaggregated data by ethnicity will make visible the social, health and economic situation of indigenous peoples from other groups of society.

**Possible recommendation:** In the context of COVID-19, the Forum reaffirms recommendations on health made at the sessions of Forum and calls on States and Governments, UN entities (WHO and PAHO) to fully incorporate a cultural perspective into health policies, programmes and health services. The Forum calls on governments to ensure the participation of indigenous peoples in all recovery efforts, in particular the vaccines campaigns. The Forum urges states and governments to ensure the right to education of indigenous children and youth, particularly to the right to access to information, communication technologies. The Forum reiterates recommendations on indigenous women at the sessions of the Forum, in particular calls on Governments to promote and support indigenous women's lead socio-economic initiatives. All of these recommendations must be exercised through indigenous peoples right to self-determination.

### **Indigenous peoples' rights and climate change**

Indigenous peoples across the region already perceive and experience negative effects of the climate crisis. Indigenous peoples constitute about 6.5 percent of the population in the region and are among its poorest and most vulnerable. Indigenous peoples' well-being, health, livelihoods, social organization, and social justice are threatened by megaprojects and the expansion of agricultural, livestock and monoculture developed in their lands and territories without their free and informed consent. Indigenous peoples suffer violations of their human rights through different forms and methods of dispossession of their lands, territories leading to the destruction of their natural surroundings. Often, indigenous human rights defenders who speak out face intimidation and violence, often supported by the state. In some cases, they are physically attacked and killed.

Topics highlighted include the recognition and preservation of indigenous traditional knowledge as a vital tool to protect the environment and tackle climate change; recognition of the collective rights to indigenous peoples' lands and territories and the urgent need to develop mechanisms of dialogue.

**Possible recommendation:** States to ratify the Escazú Agreement designed to protect environmental defenders, including indigenous environmental defenders across the region.

## **Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia 3 - 4 March 2021**

### **Peace, justice and strong institutions and participation of indigenous peoples**

There are various forms and models of indigenous peoples' participation in decision-making throughout the region. No one form or model can be a universal solution, it is necessary to carefully study existing best practices in order to better adapt them to particular situations in different regions. In general indigenous peoples have representation in both executive and legislative bodies in the region. Regular and constructive dialogue between the States, indigenous peoples' organizations and private entities is vital, free of any discrimination or inequality regarding the status of indigenous peoples. The process of

establishing a Council of Ombudsmen on the rights of indigenous peoples, as well as of consultative bodies with State institutions were highlighted as examples of best practices. A pragmatic approach is desirable in terms of using the opportunities that different political systems provide for participation in decision-making. The principle of free, prior and informed consent needs to be treated in a comprehensive and systemic way. Participation of indigenous peoples in international activities and fora should be further developed.

**Possible recommendation:** Legislation and practice should be developed alongside one another, and core legislation should be implemented in a comprehensive and consistent manner.

### **Rights of the indigenous child**

There is a consensus among indigenous peoples, state authorities and human rights institutions that the rights of indigenous children should be equal to those of their non-indigenous counterparts, and they should be able to fully exercise their rights to culture, language and traditions together with other family members in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The principle of indivisibility of human rights should guide the legislative work and practical implementation of existing laws, striving to avoid or minimize potential conflicts between rights, for example, the right to quality education vs. the right to live in the family, right to study in an indigenous language vs. equal employment opportunities. One solution is to move all vital services, including education, healthcare, and justice, closer to indigenous peoples' territories and residences. At the same time, harmful practices of boarding schools should be revised and replaced by practices that support traditional ways of life and promote traditional family values. Placing children in boarding schools also diminishes fishing quotas, which depend on the number of family members living together.

Advanced practices introduced on subnational level allow for in-community residence and enjoyment of the rights of the indigenous child. These include IT-camps, nomadic schools and kindergartens, professional education, scholarships for language learners, health monitoring, mobile and telemedicine in remote areas, medical aviation, social payments and housing support. More needs to be done in producing new textbooks in indigenous languages, providing ethnocultural environments and multidimensional education, and developing ethnopedagogy including parents and skilled language and traditional knowledge carriers in the education process.

The combination of innovative methods with rights protection and remedy institutions including ombudsmen offices promotes the implementation of all rights without losing ties with families and traditional way of life.

**Possible recommendation:** Permanent Forum to elaborate on a global strategy and guidelines in the best interests of the indigenous children and indigenous families with children based on best practices from different countries.

### **Priorities of indigenous peoples, including indigenous languages**

While the International Year 2019 was mostly focused on awareness raising about critical loss of indigenous languages, the International Decade of Indigenous Languages should bring to action urgent steps at international, national and local levels. Indigenous peoples' participation and the role of education systems are essential in the preparation for and implementation of language policies. Participants acknowledged that language is a key for the realization of other human rights of indigenous peoples due to their crucial identity-building power.

Implementation of the principle of free, prior and informed consent means security for indigenous peoples, but also contributes to security and sustainability for business companies that implement projects in indigenous territories, including forestry, mining, extraction of mineral resources. Companies need to be socially responsible and States should create legislative conditions for business based on the

internationally agreed minimum standards for the rights of indigenous peoples enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. A law on ethnological expertise or socio-cultural impact assessment that is enforced in several territories is a possible advanced positive practice in that regard. Although law and policy currently vary from region to region, both regional and federal standards must be reformed to meet the minimum standards set by the Declaration. Accordingly, participation of subnational governments in international indigenous-specific bodies informs and enhances implementation of indigenous peoples' rights. Indigenous peoples must have equal rights and recognized status, regardless of the size of their populations or memberships. Participants expressed concern regarding the differential rights of indigenous peoples who live inside or outside of their territories and the ramifications of state organs providing financial benefits only to some members of indigenous communities.

**Possible recommendations:** Call on States to adopt national and subnational action plans, strategies and programmes to support indigenous languages. Especially in the times of the pandemic, digital content in indigenous languages should be created.

### **African Region 14-15 April**

#### **COVID-19 and Indigenous Peoples: Impact and Recovery**

From the beginning of the COVID-19 indigenous peoples have not had access to the media formats used by governments to disseminate information on the pandemic. Language barriers were also cited as many indigenous peoples do not speak the dominant languages used (French/English/Arabic) and government information on COVID-19 did not take into consideration the need to translate the information into indigenous languages. Indigenous leaders have created WhatsApp groups to disseminate information. Broader indigenous communities do not have information due to geographical isolation and digital divide. Initiatives launched by IOM in the northern border region of Chad and Cameroon sensitized indigenous peoples on COVID-19 information. UN Women has also provided financial support for sensitization efforts. The impact of COVID-19 on indigenous peoples (pastoralists) has been marked, especially with regard to violence and armed groups. Markets have been closed since last year. As borders remain closed, herders/pastoralists are unsure where to go and have been left in a difficult situation. Funding is used in areas where pastoralists are not located. International development and humanitarian partners, owing to COVID-19 containment measures and the economic crisis have significantly reduced their activities. The vulnerable groups who depended on it found themselves overnight without food and healthcare, etc. Indigenous peoples have also been experiencing increased insecurity, in particular women, children and older persons. Moreover, the pandemic has increased the vulnerabilities of marginalized communities within indigenous peoples, such as women, children and persons with disabilities. The closure of orders has also impacted herding communities. There is a great need for resources: clean water, sanitary kits and personal protection equipment. Indigenous peoples are calling for equal access vaccines and other measure to ensure effective recovery.

#### **Human Rights Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Africa**

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights established a Working Group (WG) on Indigenous Populations/Communities in 2000. The WG has held meetings with UN-DESA, UN WOMEN, ILO, and other UN agencies to discuss the implementation of their mandate and establish partnerships for the following objectives: implementation of the System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP); identifying opportunities for the WG to work collaboratively to create UN policies and frameworks; and

implementing the SDGs while identifying any gaps to ensure to leave no one behind. International and regional instruments governing the rights of indigenous peoples exist, including in Africa, notably with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. For rights to exist in favor of an individual or group, it is necessary that the individual or group not only be identified but legally recognized, in other words that they be subject of law - that they exist legally. This is fundamental because it is legal existence that authorizes legal action. If you do not exist legally, you cannot claim any rights.

For indigenous peoples, human rights as universally recognized include not only individual rights but also the collective rights of indigenous peoples and communities. There is a desire for greater representation of indigenous peoples in politics as witnessed in the LAC region. Despite the numerous challenges, there are existing frameworks to find solutions such as the World Conference on Indigenous People (2014) with the outcome of the SWAP (with its six objectives). The UN reform agenda provides an opportunity to incorporate indigenous perspectives in UN country teams. It was noted that human rights and indigenous peoples' access to vaccines are intertwined and that international bodies should advocate for equal access to vaccines. When Member States are submitting their UPR reports, this is the time for IPOs to present an authentic account of how indigenous peoples have been impacted by COVID-19. Building back better is building back with the full participation of indigenous peoples. Less than 5 percent of African States partially recognize the existence of indigenous peoples and communities – the first obstacle facing indigenous African peoples in the quest for their rights. How can African indigenous peoples demand respect for their rights when they are not legally recognized? Serious and repeated violence is committed against indigenous Africans by States, by transnational corporations that covet or exploit their lands and natural resources. This occurs with complete impunity, as members of indigenous communities are beaten, driven from their traditional territories, imprisoned or killed.

### **Environment: impact on African Indigenous peoples and prospective for the 2021, 3 COPs (UNFCCC, UNCCD, UNCBD)**

Indigenous peoples in Africa expressed their concern with the effects of climate change and the need to participate in international climate change processes. In this regard, the establishment of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) of the UNFCCC is a positive step, which has led to sharing of best practices in climate change mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner, exchanging knowledge and integrating indigenous peoples' knowledge into policies implementation. The Facilitative Working Group has also been engaged in mapping and supporting communities, especially funding-wise from all regions in relation to climate change to build the online platform. Traditionally, African indigenous peoples have also faced challenges regarding participation due to lack of funding, particularly those with virtual the participation with no translation. The need for more indigenous peoples to take part in such meetings was raised.

Calls for online training for indigenous peoples regarding the various platforms were made. It is paramount that the concept of Leave No One Behind be implemented in Africa: there's a wealth of knowledge to be cultivated and a great need to preserve biodiversity against climate change. Environmental programmes and projects are not reaching indigenous communities because of the insecurity around indigenous lands, which is not a reason to leave these communities behind. Usually where there are existing environmental laws protecting indigenous peoples and their lands, they are not fully implemented. It is important that indigenous peoples are included at the highest decision-making processes which impact them and for them to be educated on some of the crucial issues discussed at COPs meetings. Indigenous peoples want to be included in the 17 SDGs. There were repeated calls to improve and enhance the participation of indigenous peoples in these forums.

### **Permanent forum session 2021 and other issues**

SDG16 is very important for African indigenous peoples, especially in the Sahel region, because insecurity. Many communities are fighting killing each other in indigenous territories. It is very important to use the indigenous method of conflict resolution that respects indigenous culture and identity. Indigenous women and youth are vital to peacebuilding. They must be included at the international level.

It is also important to invest in the education of indigenous peoples to help them achieve access to justice. Most patrilocal societies are not helping indigenous women fight for their rights. Involvement indigenous youth on the 3 Rio conventions are also important, particularly related to climate change. The Forum must support their participation various meetings and programmes.

Water scarcity is pushing many nomadic indigenous peoples to sedentarism, resulting in a loss of traditional knowledge that is invaluable for combating climate change and biodiversity loss. Documenting indigenous languages is vital for promoting indigenous peoples' culture in Africa.

### *Possible recommendations*

- Permanent Forum should support the African agenda and to work closely with the African commission country Working Group. Working together at regional and global level will strengthen the 2030 Agenda, help promote the UNDRIP and the recognition of indigenous peoples in the region.
- Permanent Forum should with African indigenous peoples to provide funding and explore resources for Internet connectivity, allowing indigenous peoples to take part in virtual meetings. If they do not take part, then there is a fear they will be left behind, which occurred in 2020. Financial partners must support African indigenous peoples to improve participation.
- COVID-19 responses and post-COVID green recovery must include indigenous peoples to build back better, including equal and equitable access to the vaccine.
- Indigenous peoples should receive online training on how to use various virtual platforms. It is also important to work on traditional knowledge at the local level and share good practices. Funding opportunities should also be explored.
- It was proposed to open a school of traditional knowledge linked to pastoralist knowledge as Africa has more pastoralist tribes and include forest-dependent communities and pastoralists so that their viewpoints can be advanced.
- Environmental and development programmes and projects must reach indigenous communities living in very remote areas, because of the security issues in their regions. The UN and other humanitarian and international aid partners, programmes and projects are limited to urban areas and exclude indigenous communities that make them even more vulnerable. The Forum must help to avoid that exclusion.
- The situation of indigenous women, especially pastoral women must be improved so they can become more autonomous and have access to education and health and participate in the decision making.
- The Forum should remind Members States of the importance of use and management of transboundary natural resources that is crucial for biodiversity restoration and combatting climate change. The Forum must advocate for land rights to redefine a transhumance area of indigenous peoples.
- Water protection is very important for African indigenous peoples. Water security can help stabilize communities' access to education and help them better manage their resources. There is fear of traditional knowledge loss due to desertification loss of biodiversity.
- The Forum should recommend an annual meeting of the 3 UN indigenous mechanisms (UNPFII, EMRIP and SRIP) involving regionals institution, to ensure have better coordination, follow-up up and implementation of various recommendations.