

Questionnaire to the UN system and other intergovernmental organizations

The report of the 13th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues provides a number of recommendations within its mandated areas, some of which are addressed to the UN system and other intergovernmental organizations.

The secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues invites the UN system and other intergovernmental organizations to complete the attached questionnaire on any action taken or planned in response to the Permanent Forum's recommendations. All questionnaire responses will be placed on the Permanent Forum's website and also compiled into one report for the Forum's fourteenth session.

Please submit your completed questionnaire by **1 January 2015** to:

Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Division for Social Policy and Development
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
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The full questionnaire can be downloaded from this site :

<http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/UNPFIIISessions/Fourteenth/Questionnaire.aspx>

The provisional agenda for the Permanent Forum’s fourteenth session in 2015 includes:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Follow-up on the recommendations of the Permanent Forum:
 - (a) Outcome of the high-level plenary meeting also known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples;
 - (b) Post-2015 development agenda;
 - (c) Youth, self-harm and suicide.
4. Half-day discussion on the Pacific region.
5. Half-day discussion on the expert group meeting on the theme “Dialogue on an optional protocol to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People”.
6. Comprehensive dialogue with United Nations agencies and funds.
7. Human rights:
 - (a) Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
 - (b) Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
8. Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues of the Economic and Social Council and emerging issues.
9. Draft agenda for the fifteenth session of the Permanent Forum.
10. Adoption of the report of the Permanent Forum on its fourteenth session.

Questionnaire

At its fourteenth session in 2015, the Permanent Forum will review the following: (a) Outcome of the high-level plenary also known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples; (b) Post-2015 Development Agenda; (c) Youth, self-harm and suicide.

1. Please provide information on how your agency is working with these important issues in the seven socio-cultural regions of the Permanent Forum¹. Where possible, please include information on the situation of indigenous women in your responses.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched in September 2014 the report on suicide prevention “Preventing suicide: a global imperative”, where the problem of youth committing suicide emerges clearly as a priority at global level. References specifically related to the problem of suicide in indigenous groups are included:

http://www.who.int/mental_health/suicide-prevention/world_report_2014/en/

WHO is also considering, subject to funding, pilot testing the implementation of the WHO mhGAP Intervention Guide for non-specialized health workers (which includes self-harm/suicide as a priority condition) in indigenous peoples communities:

http://www.who.int/mental_health/publications/mhGAP_intervention_guide/en/

The World Health Organization, through its Regional Offices, is leading several initiatives to implement the recommendations of the Permanent Forum. With regard to youth, self-harm and suicide, PAHO/WHO organized a workshop in Chile with the support of Canada, gathering representatives from Chile, Argentina, Canada and Brazil to exchange and disseminate best practices in the field of mental health and indigenous peoples, including suicide prevention. The results of this workshop, including innovative experiences from presenters, are being compiled and will be published during 2015. PAHO is considering, depending on the availability of funds, whether to continue organizing such initiatives in other countries and will explore collaboration from other agencies and donors.

Other initiatives also take into account the mental health component. PAHO organized a hemispheric consultation on disasters risk reduction and the issue of mental health has emerged as relevant, in need of development.

In a joint initiative PAHO/CELADE/UNFPA, a methodology to include the self-identification of indigenous peoples was developed based on the experiences and lessons learnt of its implementation in some countries.

In the Western Pacific Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WPRO/WHO), Indigenous peoples’ health is an issue of concern in low and middle as well as high income countries, and hence is relevant to the crosscutting themes as well as specific goals at the proposed post 2015 development agenda.

In this regard, Australia and New Zealand have made major efforts to close the gaps in life expectancy and access to health care. While disaggregated data is often lacking, discussions

¹ UNPFII’s seven socio-cultural regions are Africa; Asia; Central and South America and the Caribbean; the Arctic; Central and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia; North America; and the Pacific.

about indigenous peoples' health raise many important issues regarding health systems and access barriers. For example, with regards to essential medicines and health technologies, there are several issues that need attention including with regards to neglected diseases that may disproportionately affect indigenous peoples in remote locations such as snakebites, improving access to and safety of delivery mass drug administration used in preventive chemotherapy for NTDs, and culturally sensitive and effective health service packages for NCDs like diabetes that are often highly prevalent in indigenous communities. Responding to these concerns is particularly relevant in the context of ongoing effort towards universal health coverage, as related to this specific goal in the proposed post 2015 development agenda.

The Bi-regional Meeting on Healthy Borders in Greater Mekong Sub-region in August 2013 highlighted the importance of culturally appropriate and sensitive services that would take into account linguistic and cultural differences in the population. Limited interaction of marginalized groups with health systems would moreover require specific approaches to provide more accessible and acceptable health services for the entire population.

The Regional strategy for Traditional Medicine in the Western Pacific (2011-2020) developed and endorsed in Oct 2011 emphasizes the contribution of traditional medicine to universal access; the importance of cooperation and the sharing of information to support the quality, safety and efficacy of traditional medicine; and the importance of protection and conservation of indigenous health resources, including traditional knowledge and bio-resources. A number of actions have been taken in the Region. The WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific is committed to provide support to countries and areas, in order to promote, where appropriate, the use of traditional/indigenous medicine for primary health care, including disease prevention and health promotion, in line with evidence of quality, safety, and efficacy taking into account the traditions and customs of indigenous peoples and communities.

2. With respect to the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum addressed specifically to your agency:

- (i) What are some of the obstacles your agency has encountered in implementing the recommendations of the Permanent Forum, including those addressed specifically to your agency?

The main obstacle faced is the lack of available information on the health status of indigenous peoples in the region. However, efforts are being coordinated to improve the disaggregated information on the health of indigenous peoples.

- (ii) What are some of the factors that facilitate your agency's implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum, including those addressed specifically to your agency?

WHO is developing an integrated framework on gender, equity and rights. In 2014, PAHO/WHO has approved resolution CD53.R14 on the Strategy of Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage, and has adopted mandatory cross-cutting themes across its programmatic work, including ethnicity.

3. Given the Forum's recommendation for the adoption of policies on indigenous peoples' issues, please specify whether your agency has:

- (i) A policy or other similar tool on indigenous peoples' issues;

Although WHO does not have a specific policy or tool, the integrated framework is highly relevant. The promotion and protection of the health of indigenous peoples is central to PAHO's mandate. As mentioned above, PAHO/WHO Strategic Plan integrates ethnicity as one of the four cross cutting themes of the Organization. Moreover, a series of resolutions have been approved to protect and implement the right to health of indigenous peoples:

In September 1993, PAHO's 37th Directing Council passed Resolution CD37.R5, which recognized the deficits in both living conditions and health among the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Said resolution aimed to implement the Health of the Indigenous Peoples Initiative of the Americas (called SAPIA, taken from its acronym in Spanish), urging governments to formulate policies and strategies geared towards specific indigenous populations, so as to break through the lack of information and ensure their greater access to high-quality health services and care—thus contributing to improved levels of equity.

In 1997, PAHO's 40th Directing Council passed Resolution CD40.R6, which recognized the ever-increasing inequity in the health status and access to basic health services of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. It took into account the economic, geographical, and cultural obstacles that, in the majority of the countries of the Region, block efficient, effective delivery of public health services and health care to people in isolated rural areas, as well as in marginalized urban areas. It urged Member States to persist in their efforts to detect, monitor, and eliminate inequities in health status and in access to basic health services among the most disadvantaged groups—especially indigenous populations.

In 2006, PAHO's 47th Directing Council passed Resolution CD47.R18, Health of the Indigenous Peoples in the Americas. It recognized the progress made by the SAPIA initiative, while acknowledging the existence of inequities in access to health services that affect between 40 and 50 million individuals from indigenous populations living in the Region of the Americas. It considered the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) impossible to reach without meeting the specific health needs of such excluded groups as indigenous populations.

In 2004, PAHO created the Gender and Ethnicity Unit, now the Gender and Cultural Diversity Unit, in order to facilitate the integration of these two dimensions—gender and ethnic origin—as social determinants of health that cross-cut all PAHO's technical cooperation from the standpoint of health equity. Within the framework of these strategies, AD/GE was linked with PAHO's Regional Plan of Action for Strengthening Vital and Health Statistics, formulated in 2003 by the Regional Committee on Health Statistics in response to PAHO's mandate from the countries of the Region. The purpose was to propose a stable and sustainable program to strengthen these statistics.

- (ii) Recent programmes on indigenous peoples' issues;

In PAHO/WHO a Strategic Document on Ethnic Diversity and health is being developed in consultation with key stakeholders from the Region. Said document will serve as a guide for the region of the Americas

(iii) Budgetary allocations for indigenous peoples' issues;
The PAHO/WHO Strategic Plan recognizes ethnicity as a cross-cutting theme and therefore all programs allocate specific interventions taking into account this cross-cutting theme with specific budget allocated.

(iv) Projects/activities on indigenous peoples' issues,
Missions, meetings....

In order to facilitate the quantification of data by the Forum, please indicate the number of programmes and projects/activities devoted to indigenous peoples issues in the past year.

4. Does your agency have regular or ad hoc capacity-building programmes on indigenous peoples' issues for staff, or a plan for capacity-building activities in this area, at headquarters or in the field?

PAHO/WHO has virtual and in-person courses on cultural diversity and health both at the institutional and ministerial level. *An ethnic approach to health* can be found at:

<http://cursos.campusvirtualesp.org/course/view.php?id=39>

5. Does your agency have a focal point on indigenous peoples' issues? If so, please provide the name and contact information of this person.

The Gender and Cultural Diversity Unit (PAHO/WHO) is in charge of all issues pertaining to cultural diversity, including indigenous peoples for the Americas and the Caribbean. The Gender and Cultural Diversity unit Chief is Dr. Anna Coates and can be reached at coatesa@paho.org.

The Gender and Cultural Diversity unit (GD) provides technical co-operation and assistance to PAHO's technical units and Member States to promote gender and ethnic equality and equity in the development of health policies and programs. GD seeks to identify and reduce the inequities between women and men of all ethnic groups with regard to health status and its determinants, access to and quality of health care, and participation in decision-making regarding policy agendas, definition of priorities, and allocation of resources.

6. Please provide a list of conferences and other meetings organized or supported by your agency on indigenous peoples' issues for 2014 and 2015.

In 2014 the following meetings were implemented:

PAHO/WHO organized, in collaboration with UNFPA, Indigenous Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank, a side event on *The Health of Indigenous Peoples*. The event had a large participation of indigenous women. In order to reaffirm its commitment with the rights of Indigenous peoples, PAHO will be co-chairing the GIRPI (Inter-Agency Regional Group on Indigenous Issues) during year 2015.

In 2014, PAHO/WHO organized and/ or participated in the following meetings and capacity building activities on ethnic diversity and health:

Bolivia: Technical meeting with Indigenous Fund representatives to strengthen collaboration

Canada: Hemispheric Consultation on Disasters Risk Reduction and Indigenous Peoples

Guyana: Consultation on Ethnic Diversity and health with UN agencies, Ministry of Health and civil society

Paraguay: Workshop on ethnic diversity and health: shared experiences Brazil/Paraguay

Peru: Technical Meeting with Oras-Conhu on

Venezuela: PAHO participated in the Workshop on Intercultural health organized by the Latin-American School of Health (ELAM); PAHO also organized a meeting to provide technical support to the National Directorate of Indigenous health (Ministry of Health); PAHO also participated in the First Congress on Indigenous Health

In 2015 the following meetings are being planned:

- PAHO/WHO will participate in the 6th International Meeting on Indigenous Child Health (Canada)
- Other meetings are being planned in the Latin American Region