



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2 July 2020

Excellency,

Reference is made to the General Assembly resolution 71/321 entitled, “*Enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples’ representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them*”, which requests the President of the General Assembly to organize and preside over informal interactive hearings and to prepare a summary of each hearing, during its seventy-second, seventy-third and seventy-fourth sessions, on the margins of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, with indigenous peoples, ensuring, to the extent possible, balanced regional representation.

The first and second interactive hearings have taken place on the margins of the Permanent Forum during the seventy-second and seventy-third sessions of the General Assembly on 17 April 2018, and 25 April 2019, respectively. The third and final informal interactive hearing was scheduled to take place on the margins of the 19th session of the Permanent Forum in April 2020. Due to COVID-19, Members of the Permanent Forum postponed its 19th session to a later date, which is yet to be determined. A copy of the letter of postponement is attached.

While the probability of convening the third informal interactive hearing through a virtual format has been considered, with the intention to fulfill the mandate given by the said resolution to the President of the General Assembly, I received a recommendation from the co-chairs of the Quito Dialogue Meeting - on behalf of the Temporary Committee for the Indigenous Coordinating Body for Enhanced Participation in the United Nations, not to convene the third and final informal interactive hearing through a virtual format, but to postpone it until in-person meetings can take place to allow the broadest and inclusive participation of Indigenous Peoples and Member States. A copy of the letter from the Co-chairs of the Quito Dialogue Meeting is enclosed.

I avail of this opportunity to express my solidarity with Member States who are fighting COVID-19 and extend my sincere condolences for their loss.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, flowing script.

Tijjani Muhammad-Bande

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



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5 March 2020

Your Excellency,

This is to inform you that in light of the extraordinary situation related to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues convened an emergency teleconference meeting on Thursday 5 March.

At this meeting the Permanent Forum decided to postpone its forthcoming 19th session, that was scheduled to take place on 13-24 April 2020, until a later date, to be determined.

The Members of the Permanent Forum did not take this decision lightly but believe that this is the only responsible action to take, considering the high level of participation of indigenous peoples, Member States, UN entities and civil society at the annual sessions of the Permanent Forum. An additional factor is the already precarious health situation that many indigenous peoples live in, and the imperative to avoid adverse impacts.

The Members of the Permanent Forum emphasize that this decision was in response to the urgent and exceptional circumstances related to the COVID 19 global outbreak. They reiterate the importance of implementing their mandate to address the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples across the globe. In this regard the Permanent Forum expresses its commitment and flexibility in seeking possible alternative dates and venues to organize the Forum's 19th session.

As the Chair of the Forum, I am, as ever, ready to cooperate with you on this matter, including the necessary arrangements to submit draft decisions to the Council regarding the future work of the Permanent Forum and its next 20th session in 2021.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Anne Nuorgam', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Anne Nuorgam
Chairperson
United Nations Permanent Forum
on Indigenous Issues

H.E. Ms. Mona Juul
President of the Economic and Social Council
United Nations, New York

June 22, 2020

Excellency,

We write to you on behalf of the Temporary Committee for the Indigenous Coordinating Body for Enhanced Participation in the United Nations, which is an outcome of the second “Dialogue Meeting on Enhanced Indigenous Peoples’ Participation at the UN” held on 27-30 January 2020 in Quito, Ecuador. The Committee includes Indigenous Peoples representatives from the seven indigenous socio-cultural regions, tasked to facilitate cooperation amongst Indigenous Peoples with regard to the enhanced participation process in the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

We recognize and welcome the efforts of the General Assembly to continue the process based on decisions made in resolution 71/321 entitled “Enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples’ representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them“, despite the current extraordinary circumstances.

We would like, however, to draw your attention on a particular point of concern for our collective, based on information received by the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues regarding the third session of “The Informal Interactive Hearing of the President of the General Assembly on Enhanced Participation of Indigenous Peoples” initially scheduled for April 15, 2020 and postponed to a date later to be decided by the Assembly. It has come to our attention that early July is now being considered.

In this regard, we would like to point out that the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples clearly outlines the need for full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, allowing Indigenous Peoples to be adequately represented in deliberations so that concerns are genuinely taken on board in all decision making processes that affect them. Moreover, considering the unique and current circumstances of Indigenous Peoples, virtual meetings for the vast majority of Indigenous Peoples’ representative institutions is not feasible.

Therefore, in light of the current Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) we have consulted the Temporary Committee in the past days to consider postponement of the hearing. As a result of those consultations we recommend that the informal interactive hearing currently considered to be held in early July, be postponed until in-person meetings can take place allowing the broadest and most inclusive participation possible of Indigenous Peoples and Member States.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.



Tuomas Aslak Juuso



Estebancio Castro-Diaz

Co-chairs of the Quito Dialogue Meeting on behalf of the Temporary Committee

H.E. Prof. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande
President of the UN General Assembly