



PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CONCEPT NOTE

Informal interactive hearing with Indigenous Peoples on enhanced participation at the United Nations

20 April 2023, 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Conference room 1, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Objectives

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/321, the President of the General Assembly will organize an informal interactive hearing with Indigenous Peoples at the margins of the twenty-second session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as part of the preparatory process to consider possible further measures necessary to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in relevant United Nations meetings on issues affecting them at the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Background

The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, held in September 2014, resulted in the sharing of perspectives on and good practices for the realization of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including by pursuing the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the Declaration). The Conference also reaffirmed commitments to consult and cooperate in good faith with Indigenous Peoples through their own representative institutions before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

Several articles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are relevant to these hearings:

- Article 3 – the right to self-determination, freely determine their political status and pursue economic, social, and cultural development;
- Article 18 – the right to participate in decision-making in matters affecting their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures;
- Article 41 - The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations shall contribute to the full realization of the provisions of

this Declaration. Ways and means of ensuring participation of indigenous peoples on issues affecting them shall be established.

Over the past decade, the UN Secretary General made recommendations, in [2012 to the Human Rights Council](#) (A/HRC/21/24) and in [2020 to the General Assembly](#) (A/75/255), on how to use, modify and improve existing United Nations mechanisms to achieve the ends of the Declaration, including specific proposals to enable the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions, and on ways and means of promoting participation at the United Nations of Indigenous Peoples' representatives on issues affecting them.

In addition to providing an overview of current modalities for Indigenous Peoples' participation in various United Nations bodies, the Secretary General outlined possible ways forward regarding the development of a procedure to enable the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives in the United Nations, and highlighted issues for further consideration.

The Secretary-General also set out a series of considerations for the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives in the United Nations, namely:

- (a) Criteria for determining the eligibility of Indigenous Peoples' representatives for accreditation as such;
- (b) Nature and membership of the body to determine the eligibility of Indigenous Peoples' representatives for accreditation;
- (c) Details of the process, including the information required to be submitted to obtain accreditation as an Indigenous Peoples' representative;
- (d) Procedures that will make the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives meaningful and effective.

At the 2019 General Assembly informal hearing with Indigenous Peoples, many of the same key issues and recommendations were discussed as per previous hearings. The recommendations are included in the [summary](#) of the hearing, circulated in a PGA's letter dated 20 May 2019, and cover issues regarding selection criteria as well as venues and modalities of participation.

In addition, Human Rights Council [Resolution 48/11](#) of September 2021 requested the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to convene a four-day expert workshop in 2022 on possible ways to enhance the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the work of the Human Rights Council, and to prepare a summary report on the discussion and the resulting recommendations and to submit it to the Council prior to its fifty-third session. The workshop took place in November 2022 and the summary report is forthcoming. The workshop followed a half-day intersessional interactive dialogue on the topic held in July 2019 and an intersessional round table on the same subject organized in July 2021.

Format

This will be the last of a series of three informal interactive hearings with Indigenous Peoples as part of the preparatory process for the consideration by the General Assembly of possible further measures necessary to enhance the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions in relevant United Nations meetings on issues affecting them. The previous two informal hearings took place during the 72nd and 73rd sessions of the General Assembly.

The event will consist of an opening segment and a plenary meeting. In the opening the President of the General Assembly and the Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will deliver statements. The opening session will be followed by a panel discussion composed of representatives of Indigenous Peoples. After that, the floor will be open to participants. Intervention should not last more than 3 minutes.

Participants

The meeting is open to Member States, Observers of the General Assembly and Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions from all regions of the world. Indigenous Peoples attending the 22nd session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues do not require additional accreditation to attend the informal interactive hearing. There will be no pre-established list of speakers. Participants wishing to take the floor are invited to press the microphone button.

Outcome

The President of the General Assembly will prepare a summary of the informal interactive hearing, in line with resolution 71/321. The summary will be circulated to all Member States, Observers of the General Assembly, and Indigenous Peoples.