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**Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the 2030 Agenda
for Sustainable Development**

System-wide action plan for ensuring a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: implementation by the United Nations system

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present report provides a brief compilation of the information received from United Nations system entities and other intergovernmental bodies in response to a questionnaire on actions taken to implement the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the system-wide action plan for ensuring a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The complete responses are available at <http://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/unpfii-sessions-2/unpfii-20th-session.html>.

* E/C.19/2021/1.



I. Introduction

1. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is mandated to provide expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the Economic and Social Council, as well as to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, through the Council; to raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the United Nations system; to prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues; and to promote respect for and full application of the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and, in accordance with article 42 of the Declaration, follow up on its effectiveness. To that end, the Forum makes recommendations in the areas of economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.

2. At the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, held in 2014, Member States requested the development of a system-wide action plan for ensuring a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Following months of consultation with indigenous peoples, Member States and United Nations entities, the system-wide action plan was finalized 2015 and introduced by the Secretary-General at the opening of the fifteenth session of the Permanent Forum, in 2016. The system-wide action plan has added momentum to the efforts of the United Nations system to support the implementation of the Declaration. The Forum engages actively with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to follow up on the effectiveness of the Declaration in the context of the system-wide action plan.

3. The Permanent Forum has stated that the implementation of its recommendations must make a difference in the daily lives of indigenous peoples. An important tool for assessing the degree to which the recommendations have been implemented is the information submitted to the Forum by entities of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental bodies. The Forum acknowledges and thanks those entities that have provided reports and urges them to continue to provide information on their activities and on the follow-up to the recommendations and the system-wide action plan. The Forum also encourages agencies, funds and programmes that have not done so to provide reports on their work with indigenous peoples.

4. A questionnaire on actions taken to implement the recommendations of the Permanent Forum and the system-wide action plan was sent to 50 entities of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental bodies in November 2020. As at 18 January 2021, responses had been received from the following 18 entities: Department of Global Communications, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), Joint United Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The complete responses are available at <http://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouseoples/unpfii-sessions-2/unpfii-20th-session.html>.

5. Of the 18 entities that provided responses, 16 reported on activities to raise awareness of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; 16 reported on the implementation of the Declaration, in particular at the country level; and 16 reported that they supported the realization of indigenous peoples' rights in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, 16 entities reported on the mapping of standards and guidelines, capacities, training materials and resources within the United Nations system, international financial institutions and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues for the effective implementation of the Declaration; 15 noted that they provided capacity-building for States, indigenous peoples, civil society and United Nations personnel; 15 reported that they had advanced the participation of indigenous peoples in United Nations processes, and 16 reported activities to support indigenous peoples during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

II. Responses received from United Nations entities and other intergovernmental bodies on measures taken or planned to implement the system-wide action plan

Department of Global Communications

6. As the lead entity for raising awareness of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Department of Global Communications chairs a working group of communications professionals across the United Nations system to promote awareness of the rights of indigenous peoples through consistent messaging and coordinated outreach. The inter-agency working group shared communications messages and assets and a range of promotional products, such as digital cards, videos and background information, in several languages. A shared online platform serves as the main tool for exchanging and cross-promoting content.

7. The Department has continued to raise awareness of the Declaration at the global and local levels through a range of multimedia and multilingual platforms, including video, audio, web and social media, virtual seminars, design assets, tours and briefings. Furthermore, the Department's network of United Nations information centres works with the United Nations resident coordinators network.

Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

8. The United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, supported by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, is mandated to verify provisions of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace pertaining to the reintegration of former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army combatants and security guarantees for former combatants and conflict-affected communities, and takes into account issues of concern for indigenous peoples. The quarterly reports of the Secretary-General on Colombia to the Security Council (see [S/2020/239](#), [S/2020/603](#), [S/2020/943](#) and [S/2020/1301](#)) contain specific information on aspects affecting indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian communities.

9. The Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding and Partnership Facility supports the United Nations Resident Coordinator Offices of Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Paraguay in developing a multidimensional analysis of the Gran Chaco region. This includes an analysis of risk factors and opportunities for indigenous peoples who are affected by COVID-19.

10. The Department, together with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), OHCHR, UN-Women, ILO, FAO and UNESCO, among other United Nations entities, participated actively in the efforts of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues to draft a guidance note for the United Nations system response to the pandemic.¹ It is stated in the note that United Nations actions should be responsive to the rights and needs of indigenous peoples. The Department shared the guidance note with resident coordinators in the Latin America and Caribbean region and discussed its implementation.

11. The Department held a virtual talk for United Nations staff on the theme "Indigenous peoples, COVID-19 and conflict prevention", on 28 May 2020. Participants discussed the importance of including and empowering indigenous women and men as political and social actors amid the pandemic to reduce the risk of escalation of conflicts resulting from the impacts of COVID-19. A summary was shared in the Department's online magazine, *Politically Speaking*, which has over 10,000 subscribers, including members of the diplomatic community, scholars and United Nations staff members.²

12. As part of the United Nations initiative for the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Department conducted 30 electoral dialogues, with an emphasis on indigenous issues, including within special electoral districts for indigenous peoples. In addition, pamphlets were prepared in several indigenous languages in order to better inform indigenous peoples about the electoral process.

13. From September to November 2020, the Department supported a virtual course on conflict transformation, peacebuilding and dialogue targeting young women, including indigenous women leaders, in Guatemala. The initiative was designed to strengthen the capacity of local and national women's groups and to enhance their role in political and decision-making spaces and sustaining peace initiatives.

14. In Paraguay, the Department is cooperating with UN-Women to prepare an analytical study on political violence against indigenous women, in order to analyse the links between the low level of participation of indigenous women in politics and the incidence of violence that indigenous women face when they participate in public spaces.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

15. FAO consolidated its work with indigenous peoples in 2020, with a focus on indigenous peoples' food systems, indigenous women, indigenous youth, public policies and access to land and natural resources. With reference to indigenous peoples' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, FAO created a dedicated web page providing information on the health and safety of indigenous peoples and a policy brief on the impact of COVID-19 on indigenous peoples,³ with policy recommendations for concrete action to ensure the cultural and physical survival of indigenous peoples. It also held two webinars with indigenous peoples' organizations, institutions, universities and Member State representatives on the impact of COVID-19.

16. Biodiversity remained a key part of the work of FAO with indigenous peoples in 2020, and the links were highlighted in numerous Global Environment Facility projects. Some 45 Global Environment Facility projects and five of the six Green Climate Fund projects approved by FAO are currently aimed at delivering results in

¹ See www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2020/04/Indigenous-peoples-and-COVID_IASG_23.04.2020-EN.pdf.

² See <https://dppa.un.org/en/week-dppa-23-29-may-2020>.

³ See www.fao.org/3/ca9106en/CA9106EN.pdf.

indigenous peoples' territories. To reinforce respect for indigenous peoples' right to free, prior and informed consent, 230 FAO staff members had been trained on free, prior and informed consent as at 2020. In addition, the Office of Evaluation recruited an indigenous expert to provide advice during the evaluation of the work of FAO on Sustainable Development Goal 13 on climate action.

17. FAO organized three technical meetings in preparation for the United Nations Food Systems Summit, to be held in 2021, with indigenous representatives, United Nations offices and other stakeholders. During the twenty-seventh session of the FAO Committee on Agriculture, held in September 2020, member countries endorsed the launch of the global hub on indigenous peoples' food systems,⁴ which brings together indigenous and non-indigenous experts, scientists and researchers to establish a knowledge dialogue that will gather evidence-based contributions on indigenous food systems. In addition, the Indigenous Peoples Unit is finalizing the third edition of the publication series on indigenous peoples' food systems in close cooperation with partner organizations. FAO is also conducting assessments of food security in five countries, a report on which will be published in 2021.

18. As at 2020, the global campaign on the challenges and contributions of indigenous women in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, launched by FAO in collaboration with the International Indigenous Women's Forum and the Agency for Indigenous and Afro-descendant Women, has more than 98 partner organizations in 30 countries.⁵ The leadership school for indigenous women, established by FAO and the International Indigenous Women's Forum in 2014 to empower indigenous women leaders and activists to advocate human rights, food security and nutrition, updated its curriculums through inputs received from indigenous women in an online survey.

19. FAO has supported laws and policies in several countries and continues to work on land rights in Latin America, Asia and Africa by supporting indigenous peoples on access to and governance of their lands, providing technology and technical support. Five project profiles on customary tenure are being prepared in Asia, while in Latin America six countries are receiving technical support.

International Fund for Agricultural Development

20. In preparation for the fifth global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD, in February 2021, on the theme "The value of indigenous food systems: resilience in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic", 14 regional consultations were held online in October and November 2020, with the participation of around 500 people representing regional and subregional networks and constituencies of indigenous peoples and selected development partners.

21. Together with the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD, the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility continues to provide funding for the self-determined development of indigenous peoples' communities, building capacity and providing institutional strengthening of their organizations. In 2020, the Executive Board of IFAD approved 12 projects supporting indigenous and tribal peoples and ethnic minorities in Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, with an investment of more than \$314 million.

22. Efforts to ensure greater participation by indigenous peoples and the enhanced implementation of free, prior and informed consent throughout the IFAD project cycle are in progress. This is being achieved through the revision of its social,

⁴ See www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/global-hub/en.

⁵ See www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/indigenous-women/en.

environmental and climate assessment procedures and a note on how to seek free, prior and informed consent in IFAD investment projects.⁶ Training modules for IFAD staff on the new procedures will be delivered in 2021.

23. In July 2020, IFAD launched an initial call for nominations for the Indigenous Peoples Awards to promote best practices, share knowledge and lessons learned, and replicate and scale up successful approaches in working with indigenous peoples.

24. To take forward IFAD engagement and advocacy activities with indigenous peoples, in 2020, the IFAD President appointed the Associate Vice-President, External Relations and Governance Department, as the IFAD champion for indigenous peoples.

International Labour Organization

25. ILO released a report in February 2020 entitled *Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, No. 169: Towards an Inclusive, Sustainable and Just Future*, which provided updates on statistical data on indigenous peoples, indicating that there are over 476 million indigenous and tribal peoples in the world.

26. Indigenous peoples are 20.0 percentage points more likely to be in the informal economy than members of the non-indigenous population: 86.3 per cent of the global indigenous population has an informal job compared with 66.3 per cent of the non-indigenous population. Indigenous women have particularly high informality rates and are 25.6 percentage points more likely to work in the informal economy than their non-indigenous counterparts. Among employed indigenous and tribal persons, almost 47 per cent have no education (53.5 per cent for women), compared with 17 per cent for their non-indigenous counterparts (17.8 per cent for women). Indigenous and tribal peoples are nearly three times more likely to be in extreme poverty. Over 18 per cent of indigenous women live on less than \$1.90 per day.

27. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, ILO issued a policy brief to explore how pre-existing inequalities experienced by indigenous and tribal peoples were shaping the impacts of the pandemic on them and to outline immediate and longer-term action to ensure an inclusive and sustainable response and recovery. ILO and Indigenous Navigator⁷ collaborated to prepare a series of reports on indigenous peoples' rights and development, including on the impacts of COVID-19, drawing upon community based-data and qualitative research.

28. New materials to promote ILO Convention No. 169 include a tool for judges and lawyers, drawing upon the work of the ILO supervisory bodies;⁸ a series of country profiles for Latin America on existing laws, policies and other measures to apply Convention No. 169;⁹ and an online search modality providing easy access to the observations and recommendations of the ILO supervisory bodies related to Conventions Nos. 169 and 107.¹⁰

29. A number of ILO interventions at the country level supported access for indigenous and tribal peoples to decent work and social protection, with a specific focus on indigenous women, as well as the establishment and strengthening of institutions and legal frameworks to give effect to indigenous and tribal peoples' rights to participation and consultation. They included support for strengthening State

⁶ See www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/publication/asset/39181253.

⁷ See <https://indigenousnavigator.org>.

⁸ See https://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/Publications/WCMS_757967/lang--es/index.htm.

⁹ See https://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/Publications/WCMS_758166/lang--es/index.htm.

¹⁰ See www.ilo.org/global/topics/indigenous-tribal/toolbox/lang--en/index.htm.

institutions and work with indigenous women entrepreneurs in Guatemala; building capacity for the financial inclusion of indigenous women and supporting community-based tourism in Argentina; working with indigenous and quilombola communities on agroecological food production and marketing in Brazil; building skills and generating jobs through community-based water supply projects in Papua New Guinea and the Philippines; and improving the working conditions of tea garden workers in Bangladesh, including wage increases and health protection in connection with COVID-19.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

30. The UNAIDS strategy for 2016–2021¹¹ is a bold call to action to accelerate the global response and reach people being left behind – including indigenous peoples – as part of the 2030 Agenda.

31. In Latin America, UNAIDS has expanded its efforts, working closely with communities and States, to collect data and produce analysis of the current situation in the region, in order to support advocacy strategies for the inclusion of indigenous peoples as a priority population in the AIDS response. It has also been working with partners to contribute to the expansion of access to health, including HIV services, among indigenous peoples.

32. Since 2014, UNAIDS has been providing technical and financial support to the Ministries of Health of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Peru for designing and monitoring interventions with indigenous peoples in the Amazonia and Andean areas.

33. In 2018 and 2019, the United Nations joint team on HIV in Guatemala supported the empowerment of indigenous women with regard to knowledge, attitudes and skills for assuming a more active role in decision-making for their health and well-being. In Brazil, UNAIDS, in partnership with UNESCO, is developing HIV prevention materials for the Tikunas and Waraos indigenous peoples.

34. Owing to patterns of social and economic marginalization and discriminatory enforcement, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected vulnerable communities heavily, including those of indigenous peoples. In this context, UNAIDS has emphasized human rights as a core concern for HIV and COVID-19 responses.

35. Building upon lessons on human rights from the AIDS response, UNAIDS launched *Rights in a Pandemic: Lockdowns, Rights and Lessons from HIV in the Early Response to COVID-19*,¹² showing how COVID-19 public health orders and restrictions on movement were affecting the response to HIV and the human rights of people living with and affected by HIV, including indigenous peoples.

36. With less than 10 years to go to reach the common goal of ending AIDS by 2030, UNAIDS has been tasked by its Programme Coordinating Board with developing the next global AIDS strategy. The process for the development of the strategy has been data-driven and consultative, involving UNAIDS staff, co-sponsors, Governments, civil society and people living with and affected by HIV, including representatives of indigenous peoples. An outline of the new strategy has been presented to the Board and included specific mentions of indigenous communities in different result areas.

37. In 2021, it is expected that another United Nations high-level political meeting on HIV/AIDS will be held. At previous meetings, UNAIDS had ensured the meaningful participation of indigenous peoples, and this was envisaged for future meetings.

¹¹ See www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2015/UNAIDS_PCB37_15-18.

¹² See www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2020/rights-in-a-pandemic.

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children

38. As part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Inter-Agency Working Group on Violence against Children issued a joint agenda for action on child protection and COVID-19,¹³ in which it encouraged States to pay special attention to vulnerable groups of children, including indigenous children.

39. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children is the Chair of the United Nations task force on the global study on children deprived of liberty,¹⁴ which was launched in late 2019. It is confirmed in the study that indigenous children are overrepresented in care and justice systems. The task force is now focusing on the implementation of the recommendations of the study, many of which refer to the situation of indigenous children.

40. In June 2020, the Special Representative held a meeting with the Permanent Forum to strengthen cooperation and develop joint action. A follow-up meeting at the working level was held in September 2020, at which the possibility of developing a joint global report on the situation of violence against indigenous children was discussed.

41. Advocacy for accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda and towards reaching the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals on violence against children and its drivers, while building back better, is a key strategic priority of the Special Representative. In such work, the situation of indigenous children is a cross-cutting priority in the strategy of the Special Representative, as well as in the working methods of the Office of the Special Representative, ensuring that indigenous children are not left behind in the implementation of the Goals.

42. The inclusive and meaningful participation and involvement of children is another key priority of the strategy of the Special Representative. Particular attention is given to the involvement of the most vulnerable children in decision-making processes related to violence and protection, as well as in the implementation of the Goals and voluntary national review processes. During the 2020 session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Office of the Special Representative organized, in cooperation with UNICEF and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, a voluntary national review laboratory on developing a child-sensitive and child-inclusive voluntary national review to equip Member States and partners with tools to include child rights, data and the voices of children, including indigenous children, in the reviews.

43. In 2021, the Office of the Special Representative will co-organize the World Congress on Justice for Children, with a session dedicated to access to justice for indigenous children.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

44. At Headquarters and in the field, OHCHR focuses on raising awareness of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, developing the capacities of States, indigenous peoples and United Nations country teams and advancing the participation of indigenous peoples in United Nations processes (see also [A/HRC/45/22](#) for a more comprehensive review of its work).

¹³ See www.unicef.org/coronavirus/agenda-for-action.

¹⁴ See www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/StudyChildrenDeprivedLiberty/Pages/Index.aspx.

45. In the light of the persistent lack of participation of indigenous peoples in decision-making and increasing violence against indigenous human rights defenders worldwide, the Office has stepped up its efforts to facilitate dialogue between indigenous peoples and State authorities in a number of countries. In particular, it engaged with States to address forced evictions of indigenous peoples from their traditional lands, including through support for the implementation of national and regional court decisions. It continued to act as mediator at the local and national levels in situations of social conflict with indigenous peoples and to advocate the incorporation and use of human rights standards by the State in relation to forced displacement in order to prevent and mitigate social conflict and emerging crises.

46. OHCHR also engages with development finance institutions to ensure that their activities and policies are consistent with international human rights standards and principles and that their human rights risk information is integrated into their due diligence processes. This includes the review of environmental and social safeguards policies, including those related to indigenous peoples.¹⁵ OHCHR has also engaged with a range of multilateral development banks and national development finance institutions on policy initiatives relating to reprisals against project-affected communities and the protection of environmental and human rights defenders.

47. OHCHR worked with other United Nations entities to contribute to the elaboration of the plan of action for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages under the auspices of UNESCO, and collaborated with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN-Women and ILO in a number of initiatives, notably in Africa, in partnership with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

48. OHCHR supported efforts on understanding the impacts of climate change as a driver of inequality, conflict and humanitarian crises, in order to support a rights-based prevention agenda that protects persons in vulnerable situations. It consistently stressed the importance of ensuring the meaningful and informed participation of indigenous peoples in decision-making. Special emphasis was placed on the heightened risk exposure of indigenous women and girls to climate and environmental harms and the need to ensure that their rights and voices in decision-making are protected and upheld.

49. The OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme had to be redesigned owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Office selected 20 of its most outstanding former indigenous fellows to be posted in country and regional OHCHR offices and other United Nations offices in 16 different locations.

Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect

50. The Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect has raised awareness of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through key messages provided by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect, in high-level engagements with: (a) government officials of the Latin American Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention at the annual meeting of Network focal points, held in October 2020; and (b) the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and civil society organizations in the Americas at an advocacy event in September 2020. The Special Adviser raised concerns related to the vulnerability of indigenous peoples and highlighted the need to advance key elements of the Declaration. She also stressed how the

¹⁵ More information on the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in relation to development finance institutions is available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/DFI/Pages/DFIIndex.aspx>.

disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was exacerbating structural inequalities and pervasive trends of discrimination, including an increase in hate speech. She encourages dedicated action by national authorities as part of their responsibility to protect in order to address these serious impacts, in both the response to and the aftermath of the crisis.

51. On specific standards and guidelines on indigenous peoples, the Office assesses the degree of presence or absence of risk factors through the methodology entitled “Framework of analysis for atrocity crimes: a tool for prevention”. In conducting such assessments, the Office considers the situation of indigenous populations to be particularly vulnerable and uses the tool as informed guidance to assess the risk of atrocity crimes against them. In such work, the Office also builds capacity among indigenous peoples and United Nations staff, including through the inclusion of representatives of indigenous peoples in its list of interlocutors when undertaking field-level risks assessments.

52. The Office is planning assessments with United Nations partners in the Americas in online workshops with civil society partners, including indigenous peoples, aimed at: (a) identifying challenges for the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity in specific countries; (b) identifying policy options to address them; and (c) exploring institutional reforms or arrangements that could facilitate atrocity prevention assessment and response.

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

53. The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity works within its mandate on knowledge, innovations, practices and customary sustainable use of biodiversity, in order to fulfil its obligations concerning the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The effective participation of indigenous peoples in the work of the Convention underpins their importance in all aspects of the Convention.

54. The chief mechanism to enhance the role and involvement of indigenous peoples in the achievement of the objectives of the Convention remains the Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-sessional Working Group on Article 8 (j)¹⁶ and related provisions, which has met 11 times since its establishment in 1998 and has made some notable achievements. It has successfully developed and monitored the implementation of the programme of work on article 8 (j) and related provisions and delivered a number of important guidelines and other tools.

55. A fundamental principle of the programme of work of the Working Group on Article 8 (j) has been the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples. Enhanced participation practices in the Working Group include the nomination of an indigenous co-chair to assist the chair of the meeting, as well as an indigenous peoples and local community bureau, co-chairs for sub-working groups and contact groups, and enhanced opportunities to make interventions on all agenda items.

56. The programme of work on article 8 (j) and related provisions is the main instrument that parties to the Convention have adopted to achieve the commitments in article 8 (j) and related provisions, and later Aichi Biodiversity Target 18, by 2020.

¹⁶ Article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity reads: “Subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices”.

Indigenous peoples have positioned themselves to be essential partners in the development and implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. To date, such work has produced significant results, including a set of principles and guidelines.¹⁷

57. In the lead-up to the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in China in 2021, the secretariat is embarking on extensive consultations with parties, Governments, indigenous peoples and relevant organizations to consider possible elements of work for a fully integrated programme of work on article 8 (j) and related provisions within the new global biodiversity framework.

Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

58. Land is fundamental for the development and well-being of indigenous peoples. The secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification is the sole legally binding international agreement linking the environment and development to sustainable land management. The Convention specifically covers the arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas, known as drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.

59. In its decision 5/COP.14 on the participation and involvement of civil society organizations in meetings and processes of the Convention, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention requested the secretariat to continue to work with key stakeholders, including pastoralists and indigenous peoples. In this regard, during the course of 2021, the secretariat is supporting the participation of indigenous peoples in the meetings of the governing body of the Convention (the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties) and its subsidiary bodies (including the nineteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention).

60. Civil society organizations representing indigenous peoples are engaged in the work of the Convention. In this regard, a non-governmental organization represents both indigenous peoples and other organizations within the civil society organizations panel of the Convention and works to encourage the panel to take into consideration the views of indigenous peoples. The panel has included the engagement of indigenous peoples' organizations as one of its priorities for the current biennium.

61. Furthermore, in its decision 20/COP.14 on the policy-oriented recommendations resulting from cooperation with other intergovernmental scientific panels and bodies, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention encouraged stakeholder participation, involving land managers, including indigenous peoples, as well as experts and other knowledge holders, in policies and planning for and implementation of land degradation neutrality.

62. In the framework of addressing the important aspect of access to and protection of the land, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted decision 26/COP.14 on land tenure, in which it encouraged parties to recognize legitimate tenure rights, including customary rights, consistent with the national legal framework. It also requested parties to provide effective, timely and affordable access to justice and transparent dispute resolution mechanisms and to recognize and promote fair and inclusive community-based conflict resolution mechanisms.

¹⁷ The principles and guidelines are available in all official languages of the United Nations at www.cbd.int/guidelines.

63. The recently finalized gender action plan of the Convention¹⁸ contains a strong component for the protection and development of indigenous peoples, in particular in the areas of enhancing access for women to improved knowledge and technologies that relate to effective implementation of the Convention.

United Nations Children's Fund

64. Indigenous children have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in many countries. UNICEF has supported Governments in ensuring the continuation of health services to indigenous peoples, guaranteeing accessible and quality health care even in very remote areas. It has also been working with ministries of education to address the issue of limited access to the Internet while schools are closed, including by distributing low-technology and no-technology tools and promoting visits by teachers. Campaigns with hygiene messages have been conducted in indigenous communities, including in indigenous languages. In high-income countries with indigenous populations, UNICEF National Committees have produced child-friendly communications on COVID-19 and helped to leverage mental health and psychosocial care resources to support the mental health of vulnerable children and their caregivers in indigenous communities affected by COVID-19.

United Nations Development Programme

65. On 9 August 2020, for International Day of the World's Indigenous People, Youth Co:Lab, a project co-led by UNDP and Citi Foundation, along with the Business and Human Rights team of UNDP in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO and the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, partnered to celebrate young indigenous peoples' ingenuity and their contributions to communities. The campaign consisted of various videos, blogs, a quiz and the announcement of a new small grants project, all centred around young indigenous social entrepreneurs and how they are supporting and enhancing their communities, in particular in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

66. The UNDP Equator Initiative and the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme bring together the United Nations, Governments, civil society, businesses and grass-roots organizations to recognize and advance local sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities. From 24 to 29 October 2020, UNDP helped to raise awareness of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through the "Nature for Life" hub¹⁹ organized during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly to highlight the value of indigenous peoples for the Sustainable Development Goals and nature-based solutions to climate change and the biodiversity crisis.

67. Noting the interlinked nature of risks across Latin America and the Caribbean, UNDP has committed to take action to prevent the escalation of tension and mitigate the risk of violence against indigenous peoples over the next six months, until mid-2021. In this vein, it supports the statement of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to guarantee the collective right of indigenous peoples to participate in decision-making and to be consulted, in line with the Declaration and ILO Convention No. 169.

¹⁸ See www.unccd.int/publications/gender-action-plan.

¹⁹ See www.learningfornature.org/en/nature-for-life-hub.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

68. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO promoted the voices and needs of indigenous peoples among Member States and the public. It produced its first bulletin on indigenous peoples, on the theme of COVID-19, with a contribution from the Director General, which provided information on different actions taken, including by and with indigenous peoples' partner organizations. The impacts of the pandemic on indigenous peoples and the importance of crafting context-specific local responses that protect their fundamental human rights was the theme of the UNESCO webinar series entitled "Inclusion in the time of COVID-19: addressing racism, discrimination and exclusion", in which the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and a representative of the Permanent Forum participated. UNESCO supported indigenous peoples in other emergency situations, such as the construction of a socioeconomic reactivation plan for the 24 indigenous communities of Costa Rica in the aftermath of Hurricanes Eta and Iota.

69. The *Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020: Inclusion and Education: All Means All*²⁰ was dedicated to inclusion and education and, together with the regional report on inclusion and education in Latin America and the Caribbean, contained calls for education systems to better welcome indigenous learners. UNESCO promoted the inclusion of indigenous knowledge and knowledge holders in international processes related to biodiversity, ecosystems and climate change. Although the global events foreseen in 2020, the so-called super year for climate and biodiversity, were postponed, UNESCO provided technical contributions for preparations for the events and made inputs to both the rolling workplan of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform and the consultations of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. UNESCO supported the participation of indigenous peoples in all of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services processes.

70. UNESCO established, together with the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, a grant mechanism in Asia to strengthen the capacities of indigenous youth, safeguard and promote indigenous peoples' intangible heritage and promote the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and its role in strengthening community livelihoods and well-being. UNESCO also promoted an informed debate and approach to issues related to the rights and participation of indigenous peoples in a new constitution of Chile.

71. UNESCO strengthened the participation of indigenous peoples in key international processes. A global task force on making a decade of action for indigenous languages is being established as an international governance mechanism to facilitate the International Decade of Indigenous Languages. The members of the new governing structure will include representatives of UNESCO member States, indigenous peoples, United Nations entities, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples. Important progress has also been made in the inclusion of indigenous peoples and their knowledge in the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the Programme on Man and the Biosphere and the UNESCO Global Geoparks in Latin America.

²⁰ See <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report>.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

72. Guided by the UN-Women strategic plan for 2018–2021²¹ and its strategy for the inclusion and visibility of indigenous women,²² UN-Women has supported Governments in the review and implementation of laws and policies for the inclusion and visibility of indigenous women in Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras and Paraguay. It has also supported indigenous women in advancing legislative and policy frameworks, including in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, the Philippines and Samoa; has built the capacity of indigenous women and their organizations in Ecuador, the Philippines and Viet Nam; and has supported the establishment of dialogue and mechanisms for the inclusion of indigenous women in climate decision-making processes in Ecuador. UN-Women has also worked to mainstream indigenous issues into United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework common country analyses in Chile, Nepal and Paraguay and has supported consultative mechanisms and platforms of dialogue in Colombia, Guatemala and Nepal.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

73. UN-Habitat organized a round table on indigenous peoples at the tenth World Urban Forum, in February 2020, to inform the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions entitled “Cities of opportunities: connecting culture and innovation”. The event raised awareness of challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the context of urban and housing policies. Participants in the round table explored innovative solutions to transform the narrative around the inclusion of indigenous peoples in cities. They incorporated innovative and dynamic voices into the areas of opportunities for inclusion and access to an adequate standard of living for indigenous peoples, including indigenous peoples’ representatives, non-governmental organizations, national and local governments, start-up companies and the private sector.

74. UN-Habitat integrated indigenous peoples’ issues into its strategic plan for 2020–2023.²³ Advancing indigenous land rights is a key component for the realization of outcome 2 (increased and secure access to land, and adequate and affordable housing) and domain of change 1 (reduce spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum) of the strategic plan.

World Food Programme

75. A key milestone for WFP in 2020 has been the development of the indigenous peoples’ portfolio, which includes research, advocacy and capacity development in order to mainstream indigenous peoples’ concerns into ongoing activities, guidelines, strategies, outreach and network-building.

76. In 2020, an extensive stocktaking exercise was undertaken to identify how WFP engaged with indigenous peoples, provide an analysis of the work and identify points for further action. Among the action points agreed upon was the undertaking of a set

²¹ See www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/8/un-women-strategic-plan-2018-2021#:~:text=%20With%20a%20cross-cutting%20emphasis%20on%20responding%20to,in,%20and%20benefit%20equally%20from%20governance...%20More.

²² See www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/12/strategy-for-inclusion-and-visibility-of-indigenous-women.

²³ See <https://unhabitat.org/the-strategic-plan-2020-2023>.

of baseline studies to provide an analysis of indigenous peoples' vulnerabilities to food insecurity. The following studies will be completed in the first quarter of 2021:

- (a) Central African Republic and Congo: studies on indigenous peoples and livelihoods;
- (b) Colombia: a study on indigenous peoples' access to food that respects their consumption habits and cultures;
- (c) India: a study on food and nutrition security among tribal groups in Rajasthan;
- (d) Nepal: a study on access to food security for indigenous persons with disabilities.

77. Furthermore, in November 2020, WFP endorsed a protection and accountability policy²⁴ that emphasizes the importance of analysing the threats and needs of people in the most vulnerable situations. It sets the groundwork to address those most at risk of being left behind. In this regard, WFP will continue to develop the following:

- (a) Environmental and social standards,²⁵ which are a collection of minimum requirements and commitments to do no harm enshrined in existing WFP policies, directives and guidelines. The rights of indigenous peoples are included under the protection and human rights standard and follow the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- (b) A draft guidance note on free, prior and informed consent, the purpose of which is twofold: to provide information on the importance of the principle of such consent; and to provide guidance on its application for WFP employees;
- (c) A key component of the WFP environmental and social sustainability framework, namely a learning platform to develop capacity among WFP employees on the application of the standards and safeguards;
- (d) A video game as an innovative capacity development tool to train and inform employees and cooperating partners on issues related to protection and accountability with regard to affected populations. Through an interactive scenario-based tool, WFP employees can build their awareness of issues related to rights, including those of indigenous peoples, such as the right to free, prior and informed consent.

78. An informal meeting was held at WFP headquarters in February 2020 for WFP units and indigenous peoples' organizations to share information on their respective areas of work and identify challenges and areas for collaboration. The meeting was also an opportunity to raise awareness of indigenous peoples' issues within WFP and provide recommendations for action.

World Intellectual Property Organization

79. Awareness of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is raised within the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore. References to the Declaration are included in the documentation of the Intergovernmental Committee, in particular in the most recent versions of the draft negotiating texts on the protection of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. Participants in the Intergovernmental Committee and indigenous panels organized in

²⁴ See <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000117563/download>.

²⁵ See: <https://executiveboard.wfp.org/meeting/723>.

its margins regularly advocate the Declaration as a key reference. References are also made in the WIPO publications *Promote and Protect Your Culture: A Practical Guide to Intellectual Property for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities*²⁶ and *Documenting Traditional Knowledge: A Toolkit*.²⁷

80. In furtherance of article 31 of the Declaration, WIPO provides training activities and information resources to enable indigenous peoples to make more effective use of intellectual property principles and tools in order to prevent the misappropriation of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions and protect them for the benefit of indigenous peoples themselves, if they so wish. On the norm-setting side, the Intergovernmental Committee has been mandated to continue to expedite its work, with the objective of finalizing an agreement on an international legal instrument or instruments relating to intellectual property that will ensure the balanced and effective protection of genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions during the 2020–2021 biennium.

81. In 2020, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, technical assistance activities in support of indigenous peoples continued online with the organization of and contribution to several webinars and mentoring activities, with an emphasis on indigenous entrepreneurship among indigenous peoples, in particular women.

82. The WIPO Indigenous Fellowship Programme has continued in 2020.

83. Among the most recent measures taken, and with reference to two recommendations made by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2019, the Intergovernmental Committee decided to request the WIPO secretariat to organize an indigenous expert workshop and commission the updating of a technical review issued in 2016, during the 2020–2021 biennium. The secretariat followed up on the second request in 2020.

84. Several virtual meetings of indigenous representatives who usually attend sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee, including a virtual meeting with the Chair-elect of the Intergovernmental Committee, were supported by the WIPO secretariat in 2020 with a view to facilitating preparations for accredited indigenous peoples' representatives at forthcoming sessions.

²⁶ See www.wipo.int/publications/en/details.jsp?id=4195.

²⁷ See www.wipo.int/publications/en/details.jsp?id=4235.