

Item 11: Enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples in the United Nations

Wednesday 6 July, 16:30 - 18h00

Palais des Nations

Room XIX

(will be broadcast live and archived on <http://webtv.un.org>)

CONCEPT NOTE

OBJECTIVE: The Expert Mechanism is having this dialogue with the aim of following up on recent interactive discussions held in July 2021¹ and September 2021 on enhancing participation of indigenous peoples in the United Nations.

Background

On 8 September 2017 the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/321 entitled “Enhancing the participation of Indigenous Peoples’ representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them.” This resolution is a result of a process that began with a commitment by Member States, during the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014, to consider the participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations. A report from the Secretary-General, of 27 July 2020 was issued on achievements, analysis and concrete recommendations on the possible further measures necessary to enable participation of Indigenous Peoples’ in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them.²

On 15 July 2019, the Human Rights Council organized an intersessional interactive dialogue³ during the 12th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in order to examine ways to enhance Indigenous Peoples’ participation in meetings of the Council affecting them⁴. These meetings include, but are not limited to, the annual half-day panel discussion on the rights of Indigenous Peoples⁵ and the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, both of which traditionally take place during the September sessions of the Council.

¹A/HRC/49/69.

²A/75/255

³A/HRC/44/35

⁴Pursuant to resolution 39/13 of 28 September 2018.

⁵mandated by Council resolution 18/8

In its resolution 42/19 of 8 October 2019, the Human Rights Council decided to organize another intersessional interactive dialogue in the form of a roundtable to follow up on the dialogue that had taken place on 15 July 2019.⁶

The intersessional round table was held virtually on 16 July 2021, with an aim to examine ways to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of the Human Rights Council on issues affecting them, and to facilitate dialogue between indigenous peoples' representatives and States to that end.

Recommendations from the discussion focused on the following:

- a. The Human Rights Council should take leadership over the process of enhancing the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them. It should ask OHCHR to organize an expert workshop on specific themes, for the purpose of commencing a discussion on the measures necessary to enhance participation of indigenous peoples in meetings of the Human Rights Council on issues affecting them, including on the procedural and institutional steps and selection criteria that should be applied for their participation, with the engagement of all stakeholders, including States, indigenous peoples, the Human Rights Council, national human rights institutions and relevant United Nations agencies.
- b. A new status, not based on Economic and Social Council accreditation requirements, should be developed to allow indigenous peoples to participate in Human Rights Council meetings and to distinguish them from the representatives of civil society institutions, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations or local communities.

The Human Rights Council held its annual half-day panel discussion on the rights of indigenous peoples, on 28 September 2021. It focused on the situation of human rights of indigenous peoples facing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, with a special focus on the right to participation. Participants called on States to reiterate their commitment to continue working together to remove barriers to full participation. Some States also noted that it was essential to ensure that indigenous peoples were able to participate in the Human Rights Council. They expressed commitment to supporting indigenous peoples in their call to establish a unique category for their participation in the United Nations system and urged the Council to provide a mandate to establish a workshop to bring together indigenous peoples and States to consider options for enhancing indigenous participation in the Council.

⁶ Pursuant to resolution 45/12 of 6 October 2020.

Under Human Rights Council resolution 48/11⁷, OHCHR is organizing a four-day expert workshop in the fall 2022, open to the participation of States, and indigenous peoples, including by inviting the submission of written contributions, to discuss possible ways to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples in the work of the Human Rights Council, and to submit a summary that reflects the discussions and recommendations.

⁷ A/HRC/RES/48/11