



# THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE

23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

## Concept Note

Agenda Item 3

**Discussion on the theme: Enhancing Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination in the context of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: emphasizing the voices of Indigenous youth**

Conference Room 4 | Tuesday 16 April 2024

### Introduction

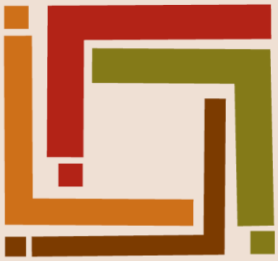
For Indigenous Peoples in the seven socio-cultural regions, the struggle for self-determination and protection of their lands, territories and resources is a shared common battle. It is important to note that, though Indigenous Peoples share a common identity as peoples, each of these peoples is unique, all with their own histories, customs, cultures, and a wide variety of experiences both past and present. Given these, it is becoming clear that the future of Indigenous Peoples will be in the hands of the younger generations. Therefore, the perspective on self-determination from the vision of Indigenous youth reflects a deep commitment to cultural resilience, community empowerment, and collective action in pursuit of justice and sovereignty for the living-well of their communities. They are at the forefront of advocating for Indigenous Peoples' rights and shaping the future of their communities in accordance with their own values and aspirations.

For instance, often for Indigenous youth self-determination is seen as inseparable from the preservation and revitalization of their cultural heritage, Indigenous languages, and traditions. They view self-determination as the right to assert their unique cultural identity and reclaim their Indigenous knowledge systems, which have been historically marginalized or suppressed.

Indigenous youth self-determination means the empowerment of their communities to make decisions that affect their lives, lands, and resources. They advocate for meaningful participation in political, social, and economic processes, emphasizing their participation as key to shape their own futures and addressing issues such as land rights, environmental protection, and social justice.

Indigenous youth recognize the importance of education and leadership development in achieving self-determination. Despite the stereotypes and the difficulties of a language different from their Indigenous language, they strive and learn the codes and protocols of this other world to become effective leaders for their people.





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Overall, Indigenous youth should not underestimate the difficult struggle that the Indigenous elders had to make to achieve changes and improvements regarding the rights of Indigenous Peoples, which a few years earlier appeared utopian, are now indeed real. The torch will have to be taken by Indigenous youth, to uphold what their ancestors have always wanted for their people.

## **Format:**

The special theme of the 23rd session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is organized into two meetings.

### Morning Meeting (10:00 am - 1:00 pm):

Panel Discussion: Each speaker is allocated 7-10 minutes.

- *H.E. David Choquehuanca*, (Aymara) Vice-President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia
- *Prof. James Anaya*, (Apache-Purepecha) University of Colorado, Boulder, Law School
- *Ms. Makanalani Gomes*, (Kānaka Maoli) Co-Chair, Global Indigenous Youth Caucus

Following the panelists' presentations, the Chairperson will open the floor for the speaker's list.

Before the conclusion of the meeting at 12:45 pm, panelists will provide brief comments to summarize the morning session.

### Afternoon Meeting (3:00 pm - 6:00 pm):

*Ms. Tove Søvndahl Gant*, a member of the Forum, will present the Study on Guiding Principles for the Implementation of Indigenous Peoples' Rights to Autonomy and Self-Government (E/C.19/2024/3).

After the presentation, the Chairperson will continue with the speaker's list.

## **Speakers' list:**

The Speakers' Lists are open to all those registered to attend the Permanent Forum as observers. These include representatives of Member States, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities, Indigenous Peoples' Organizations, National Human Rights Institutions, and Indigenous Members of Parliament.





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Indigenous Peoples' Organizations, National Human Rights Institutions and Indigenous Members of Parliament can inscribe to the Speakers' List for agenda item 3 with DESA Secretariat staff on **Monday 15 April from 5 – 6 pm in Conference Room E.**

Members States, intergovernmental organizations and UN entities can inscribe for the list of speakers with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

In accordance with the practice established at past sessions of the Forum, the list of speakers will rotate among statements by a representative of a Member State, followed by a representative of an intergovernmental organization or UN entity, followed by an Indigenous representative. Speakers will only be able to speak once under an agenda item. The time limit for all statements is three minutes.

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## **Work of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Youth:**

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) has been actively engaged in addressing the concerns and promoting the rights of Indigenous youth. In 2003, the Forum dedicated its special theme for “Indigenous Children and Youth” as well as prepared studies and recommended to the ECOSOC the organization of international expert group meetings.

Some key aspects of its work regarding Indigenous youth include:

- **Advocacy and Representation:** The Forum serves as a platform for Indigenous youth to voice their concerns, aspirations, and perspectives on various issues affecting their communities. It ensures their representation in discussions, decisions, and policy-making processes at local, national, and international levels.
- **Policy Development:** The Forum contributes to the development of policies and initiatives aimed at addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by Indigenous youth. It advocates for policies that promote their cultural preservation, access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and participation in decision-making processes.
- **Capacity Building:** The Forum through its recommendations calls for the establishment of capacity-building programs and initiatives targeted at Indigenous youth, empowering them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to become leaders and agents of change within their communities. This includes training sessions, workshops, and educational programs focused on leadership development, human rights advocacy, and cultural revitalization.





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- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** The Forum fosters collaboration and partnerships with governments, non-governmental organizations, academia, and other stakeholders to advance the rights and well-being of Indigenous youth. It promotes dialogue and cooperation to address systemic challenges and implement sustainable solutions that benefit Indigenous youth and their communities.

Overall, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues plays a crucial role in advocating for the rights and interests of Indigenous youth, ensuring their meaningful participation in decision-making processes, and promoting their empowerment and *living-well*.

## Resources

*United Nations documents on [Indigenous youth](#):*

- Committee on the Rights of the Child: [General comment No. 26 \(2023\) on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change](#)
- [Adolescent-friendly UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child: [General Comment No. 11 on Indigenous Children and their Rights under the Convention \(2009\)](#)

*Expert Group Meetings with Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination and Indigenous youth as a priority theme:*

- [Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples in a Greening Economy, 2024](#)
- [Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Youth: Identity, Challenges and Hope, 2013](#)
- [Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Children and Youth in Detention, Custody, Foster-Care and Adoption, 2010](#)
- [Expert Group meeting on Development with Culture and identity, 2010](#)

*Other resources on Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination and Indigenous Youth:*

- [International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2023](#) with the priority theme "Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for Self-determination"





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- A Study by the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, titled [“Rights of the Indigenous Child Under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- A Report by the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, titled [“The Right to Health and Indigenous Peoples, with a Focus on Children and Youth”](#)
- [Guiding principles for the implementation of Indigenous Peoples’ rights to autonomy and self-government](#), a study by Forum Members Tove Søvndahl Gant, Suleiman Mamutov and Valentina Vyacheslavovna Sovkina (2024)
- A Study by former Permanent Forum Member Victoria Tauli-Corpuz [The Human Development Framework and Indigenous Peoples’ Self-determined Development or Development with Culture and Identity](#) (2010)
- A Book published by Columbia University, titled [“Global Indigenous Youth: Through Their Eyes”](#)

