

# BACKGROUND GUIDE



## GENERAL ASSEMBLY 3rd COMMITTEE

*Ensuring Cultural Autonomy of  
Indigenous Peoples in a Globalized World*

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# Letter to Delegates

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to GA3 at MUN4Schools 2025. As part of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee, your task is to uphold some of the most essential principles of the United Nations: human dignity, cultural integrity, and equality.

This year, our agenda — "Ensuring Cultural Autonomy of Indigenous Peoples in a Globalized World" — invites you to explore how modernization and globalization can threaten, but also protect, the diverse traditions, beliefs, and identities of Indigenous peoples worldwide.

This is your chance to explore how laws, education systems, economic policies, and global media can either erase or uplift Indigenous cultures. You will need to understand the rich diversity of Indigenous communities while working through real-world conflicts: land disputes, language loss, forced assimilation, and underrepresentation.

We encourage you to be bold, research thoroughly, and most importantly — approach this topic with empathy, respect, and a true commitment to justice.

Warm regards,

Gayan , Lakshana

GA3 Executive Board

# **UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIRD COMMITTEE**

**The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (GA3) addresses human rights, humanitarian issues, and social development. It focuses on the protection of fundamental freedoms and the promotion of cultural, civil, and social rights.**

**Some areas under GA3's mandate include:**

- Protection of minorities and Indigenous peoples**
- Human rights reports and the work of the Human Rights Council**
- Refugee issues and rights of displaced persons**
- Elimination of racism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination**

**Though GA3 cannot pass legally binding resolutions, its work shapes the international narrative and guides policy-making through powerful, consensus-based statements.**

# Introduction to the Agenda

## Ensuring Cultural Autonomy of Indigenous Peoples in a Globalized World

Indigenous peoples — from the Sámi of Northern Europe to the Adivasis of India to the Mapuche of Chile — carry deep-rooted languages, belief systems, art, education, and land-based traditions. However, their autonomy is often under threat.

Globalization has increased cultural exchange, but also leads to the erosion of minority cultures. Education systems may not teach Indigenous languages.

Resource extraction projects destroy sacred lands. Global media often misrepresents or ignores Indigenous voices.

This committee challenges you to think about how to preserve cultural identity, ensure land and education rights, promote inclusivity in decision-making, and support Indigenous peoples' sovereignty and self-determination.

**The COVID-19 pandemic increased the time children spend online, and in many cases, children were left unsupervised. With limited awareness and weak laws in some countries, perpetrators take advantage of these gaps to target minors.**

**The international community must act together to create stronger online safety laws, push tech companies to monitor and report harmful activity, and educate families and schools about digital literacy and protection.**



# Key Terms of ECOSOC

- **Indigenous Peoples:** Ethnically distinct communities who have lived in a region since before colonization or the formation of current state boundaries.
- **Cultural Autonomy:** The right of a group to preserve and develop its language, customs, traditions, and institutions without forced assimilation.
- **Globalization:** The increasing interaction and integration of people, companies, and governments worldwide.
- **Self-Determination:** The right of peoples to freely determine their political status and pursue economic, social, and cultural development.
- **Assimilation:** A policy or process that attempts to erase cultural differences by forcing minorities to adopt dominant practices.

# Background Information

## History and Context

Throughout history, Indigenous communities have faced colonization, forced displacement, and cultural erasure. Many Indigenous children were removed from families and placed in residential schools — banned from speaking their languages or practicing their traditions.

Today, even after international recognition, many Indigenous communities still struggle for land rights, resource access, cultural education, and representation.

## Challenges in the Global Era

- **Loss of language:** Many Indigenous languages are endangered, with younger generations adopting dominant national languages.
- **Resource exploitation:** Governments and corporations often seize Indigenous lands for mining, logging, or infrastructure.
- **Education systems:** Schools may fail to include Indigenous history, culture, or values.
- **Digital divide:** Limited internet access makes it hard to preserve or share culture online.
- **Political underrepresentation:** Indigenous communities often lack a voice in national decisions.



# Background Information

## CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- **Land Disputes and Sacred Sites**
- **Colonial Legacy and Historical Trauma**
- **Legal Gaps in National Constitutions**
- **Cultural Misrepresentation in Media**
- **Balancing Modernization with Preservation**

## MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS

- **National Governments:** Responsible for land and education policy
- **UN Agencies (UNDRIP, OHCHR, UNESCO):** Provide legal and cultural protections
- **Indigenous Organizations and Councils:** Represent community interests
- **NGOs and Human Rights Bodies:** Advocate for legal and cultural reforms
- **Cultural Institutions:** Museums, schools, media — crucial for representation.

# Background Information



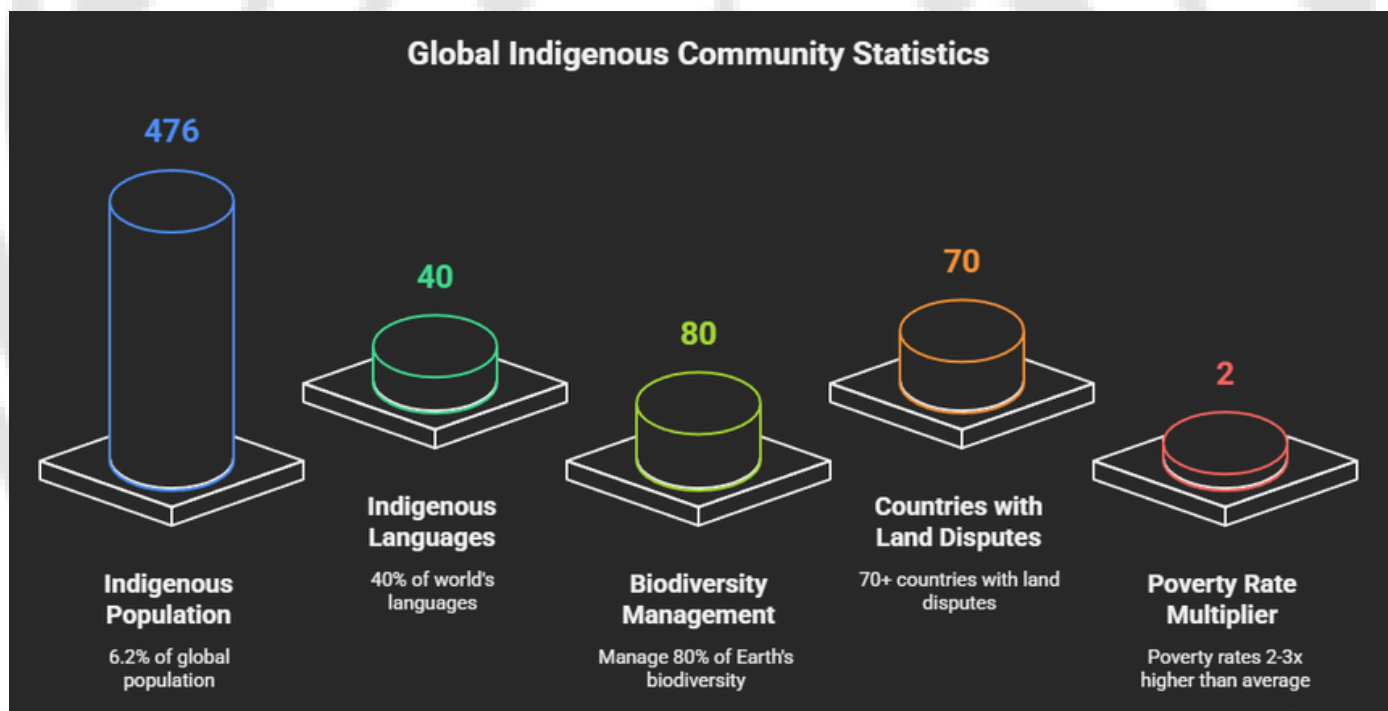
## PAST INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

- **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007):** Sets minimum standards for survival, dignity, and well-being
- **ILO Convention 169:** Binding treaty on Indigenous and tribal peoples' rights (not ratified by all countries)
- **UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage Program:** Supports language, rituals, festivals, and Indigenous knowledge systems.

# Background Information

- **International Year of Indigenous Languages (2019):** Promoted multilingualism and language preservation.

## STATISTICS



## SOLUTIONS PROPOSED BY THE CHAIR

1. **Bilingual and Culturally Inclusive Education Programs**
2. **Protection of Sacred Lands through Legal Recognition**
3. **Support for Indigenous Media Platforms**
4. **National Truth and Reconciliation Commissions**
5. **Community-Based Cultural Tourism Initiatives**

# Background Information

## QUESTIONS RESOLUTIONS MUST ANSWER

- **How** can governments balance national development with Indigenous land rights?
- **What** role should schools and universities play in preserving Indigenous culture?
- **Should** Indigenous communities have separate legal or political representation?
- **How** can technology and the arts be used to preserve Indigenous languages and stories?
- **What** obligations do global corporations have toward Indigenous groups?

## POSSIBLE MODERATED CAUCUS TOPICS

- Cultural Revitalization Through Education
- Safeguarding Indigenous Languages in the Digital Age
- Legal Frameworks for Land and Resource Rights
- Representation of Indigenous Peoples in Political Institutions
- Role of Youth in Indigenous Cultural Leadership

# Citations

- **United Nations Declaration** on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- **UNESCO.** "Cultural Diversity and Indigenous Languages."
- **UN Permanent Forum** on Indigenous Issues
- **ILO** Convention 169
- **World Bank.** "Indigenous Peoples and Development."