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**Social and human rights questions: Permanent Forum
on Indigenous Issues**

Letter dated 8 July 2025 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Attached please find a copy of my letter to the President of the Economic and Social Council, Bob Rae, regarding the appointment of members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (see annex).

I would be grateful for the circulation of the present letter as a document of 2025 session of the Council under agenda item 20 (g).

(Signed) Vassily Nebenzia



Annex to the letter dated 8 July 2025 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing with regard to the circular letter of 16 June on the appointment of eight members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution [2000/22](#) of 28 July 2000 entitled “Establishment of a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues”, as well as the letter of the same date addressed to Arthur Gayulsky, President of the Regional Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North of Krasnoyarsk Territory.

Let me recall that nine organizations of Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation addressed to you a letter dated 16 March that was forwarded to you by Mr. Gayulsky, whereby they raised concerns regarding the previous appointment of Ms. Sovkina as an expert of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on the following grounds.

Firstly, Ms. Sovkina is a representative of the Arctic Saami people, but was appointed not from the Arctic sociocultural region, but from that of Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia. Saami and Inuit people have their own system of representation in the Forum from the Arctic region. Many Indigenous Peoples of Russia live and lead their traditional way of life in the Arctic region, but they abstain from nominating their representatives from the Arctic region out of respect for an agreement reached 25 years ago allowing Saami and Inuit Peoples to take that position. Secondly, the appointment of Ms. Sovkina ignored extensive consultations among legitimate organizations of Indigenous Peoples of Russia. Ms. Sovkina does not contact organizations of Indigenous Peoples of Russia and does not represent or promote their interests. Thirdly, Ms. Sovkina allowed herself unethical statements about organizations of Indigenous Peoples of Russia and their representatives.

In view of the above, nine organizations of Indigenous Peoples of Russia sought consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council on the margins of twenty-fourth session of the Permanent Forum regarding the enhancement of their participation in it.

However, their letter remained unanswered and no consultations between the President of the Economic and Social Council and representatives of Indigenous Peoples of Russia took place. They brought their concerns to the attention of a member of the Council bureau.

After that described in the above-mentioned circular letter of the President of the Economic and Social Council, Member States were informed of your decision to appoint eight members of the Permanent Forum, which included the decision to renew the appointment of the same person – Ms. Sovkina – from the sociocultural region of Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia, for yet another tenure in the Permanent Forum. On the same date, a reply letter to Arthur Gayulsky and the Indigenous Peoples of Russia was received. This letter did not answer or even comment on any issues raised by the Indigenous Peoples of Russia and stated that “candidates were chosen after careful consideration and in consultation with the Bureau of ECOSOC, and ... they will make positive contributions to UNPFII and its important work”.

In this regard, I would like to draw your attention to operative paragraph 1 of Economic and Social Council resolution [2000/22](#), establishing the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which stipulates that eight members of the Permanent Forum will “be appointed by the President of the Council following formal consultation with

the Bureau and the regional groups through their coordinators, on the basis of broad consultations with indigenous organizations, taking into account the diversity and geographical distribution of the indigenous people of the world as well as the principles of transparency, representativity and equal opportunity for all indigenous people, including internal processes, when appropriate, and local indigenous consultation processes, with all members serving in their personal capacity as independent experts on indigenous issues ...”.

The required consultations, in particular with regional groups and, more importantly, with the Indigenous organizations representing the Indigenous Peoples of Russia, were not conducted, and their opinion brought to the attention of the President of the Council was ignored.

Thus, the criteria for the selection of the member of the Permanent Forum from the sociocultural region of Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia were violated. Ms. Sovkina was appointed as a result of such a violation. The Indigenous Peoples of Russia remained without representation in the Permanent Forum.

At the same time, it is noted that you chose to appoint two representatives of your country, Canada, as members of two different sociocultural regions (the Arctic and North America), which is scandalous and creates evident geographical imbalance in the Forum.

We consider this situation unacceptable and suggest launching a discussion on a change of the procedure for the appointment of Permanent Forum members so that it does not depend on the politicized opinion of one person.

(Signed) Vassily **Nebenzia**
