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Agenda item 67 (a)

Rights of indigenous peoples: rights of indigenous peoples

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2019

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/74/396)*]

74/135. Rights of indigenous peoples

The General Assembly,

Recalling all relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Economic and Social Council relating to the rights of indigenous peoples, reaffirming its resolutions 65/198 of 21 December 2010, 66/142 of 19 December 2011, 67/153 of 20 December 2012, 68/149 of 18 December 2013, 69/2 of 22 September 2014, 69/159 of 18 December 2014, 70/232 of 23 December 2015, 71/178 of 19 December 2016, 71/321 of 8 September 2017, 72/155 of 19 December 2017, 72/247 of 24 December 2017 and 73/156 of 17 December 2018, and recalling Human Rights Council resolutions 27/13 of 25 September 2014,¹ 30/4 of 1 October 2015,² 33/12 and 33/13 of 29 September 2016,³ 36/14 of 28 September 2017,⁴ 39/13 of 28 September 2018⁵ and 42/19 of 26 September 2019,⁶

Reaffirming the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,⁷ which addresses the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples and has positively influenced the drafting of several constitutions and statutes at the national and local levels and contributed to the progressive development of international and national legal frameworks and policies,

Recalling the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, held in

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 53A* and corrigenda (A/69/53/Add.1, A/69/53/Add.1/Corr.1 and A/69/53/Add.1/Corr.2), chap. IV, sect. A.

² Ibid., *Seventieth Session, Supplement No. 53A* (A/70/53/Add.1), chap. III.

³ Ibid., *Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 53A* and corrigendum (A/71/53/Add.1 and A/71/53/Add.1/Corr.1), chap. II.

⁴ Ibid., *Seventy-second Session, Supplement No. 53A* (A/72/53/Add.1), chap. III.

⁵ Ibid., *Seventy-third Session, Supplement No. 53A* (A/73/53/Add.1), chap. II.

⁶ Ibid., *Seventy-fourth Session, Supplement No. 53A* (A/74/53/Add.1), chap. III.

⁷ Resolution 61/295, annex.



New York on 22 and 23 September 2014,⁸ in which Heads of State and Government, ministers and representatives of Member States reiterated the important and continuing role of the United Nations in promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples, recalling the inclusive preparatory process for the high-level plenary meeting, including the comprehensive engagement of the representatives of indigenous peoples, and welcoming and reaffirming the commitments, measures and efforts undertaken by States, the United Nations system, indigenous peoples and other actors in its implementation,

Encouraging the active engagement of indigenous peoples in the implementation of the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, including at the regional and global levels,

Recalling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁹ and stressing the need to ensure that no one is left behind and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first, including indigenous peoples, who should participate in, contribute to and benefit without discrimination from the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and encouraging Member States to give due consideration to all the rights of indigenous peoples while implementing the 2030 Agenda,

Stressing the importance of promoting and pursuing the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples also through international cooperation to support national and regional efforts to achieve the ends of the Declaration, including the right to maintain and strengthen the distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions of indigenous peoples and the right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State,

Bearing in mind the policy instruments in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration¹⁰ for Member States to draw on, including to respond to the needs of migrants who face situations of vulnerability, including indigenous peoples,

Taking note with appreciation of the agreed conclusions of the sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women,¹¹ in which Governments at all levels and as appropriate, with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates and bearing in mind national priorities, were urged to promote and protect the rights of indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers they face, including violence, ensuring access to quality and inclusive education, health care, public services, economic resources, including land and natural resources, and women's access to decent work, and promoting their meaningful participation in the economy and in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas, while respecting and protecting their traditional and ancestral knowledge, and while recognizing their cultural, social, economic, political and environmental contributions, including to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and noting the importance for indigenous women and girls of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,

Recognizing that violence against indigenous women and girls has a negative impact on their enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and constitutes

⁸ Resolution 69/2.

⁹ Resolution 70/1.

¹⁰ Resolution 73/195, annex.

¹¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2019, Supplement No. 7 (E/2019/27)*, chap. I, sect. A.

a major impediment to indigenous women's full, equal, meaningful and effective participation in society, the economy and political decision-making, and in this regard recalling Human Rights Council resolution [32/19](#) of 1 July 2016, entitled "Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women: preventing and responding to violence against women and girls, including indigenous women and girls",¹² which brings closer attention to this issue, and recognizing also the negative effects of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination,

Stressing the importance of the empowerment and capacity-building of indigenous women and youth, including their full and effective participation in decision-making processes in matters that affect them directly, including policies, programmes and resources, where relevant, that target the well-being of indigenous women, children and youth, in particular in the areas of health, education, employment and the transmission of traditional knowledge, languages, spiritual and religious traditions and practices, and the importance of taking measures to promote awareness and understanding of their rights,

Deeply concerned at the vast number of endangered languages, in particular indigenous languages, and stressing that, despite the continuing efforts, there is an urgent need to preserve, promote and revitalize endangered languages, in particular indigenous languages,

Recognizing the importance of the International Year of Indigenous Languages to draw attention to the critical loss of indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages, including as an educational medium, and to take further urgent steps to that end at the national and international levels,

Welcoming the initiatives and events undertaken by Governments, indigenous peoples and the United Nations system related to the celebration of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, including the lead role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the steering committee for organizing the International Year, in consultation and cooperation with Member States, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as indigenous peoples and a range of different stakeholders,

Recognizing that indigenous peoples can contribute to a range of issues on the international agenda,

Recognizing also the importance to indigenous peoples of revitalizing, using, developing and transmitting to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literature,

Expressing concern that, in many cases, suicide rates in indigenous peoples' communities, in particular among indigenous youth and children, are significantly higher than in the general population,

Bearing in mind the importance of promoting respect for the rights of indigenous children, in particular eliminating the worst forms of child labour, in accordance with international law, including relevant human rights law and international labour law obligations,

Recognizing the importance of access to justice in the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples and individuals and the need to examine and take

¹² See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 53 (A/71/53)*, chap. V, sect. A.

steps to remove obstacles to justice, especially for indigenous women, indigenous children, youth, older persons and indigenous persons with disabilities,

Reiterating the responsibility of transnational corporations and other business enterprises to respect all human rights, while recognizing the specific challenges that may be faced by indigenous peoples, and all applicable laws and international principles and to operate transparently and in a socially and environmentally responsible manner, and emphasizing the need to refrain from negatively affecting the well-being of indigenous peoples and to take further action towards corporate responsibility and accountability, including the prevention, mitigation and remediation of human rights abuses, in line with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework,¹³

Recalling the report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples,¹⁴ noting with concern her findings with regard to attacks against indigenous human rights defenders and her reflections on available prevention and protection measures, and calling upon all States to consider the recommendations contained in the report,

Taking note with appreciation of the decision of the Human Rights Council, in its resolution 39/13, that the theme of the annual half-day panel discussion on the rights of indigenous peoples to be held during the forty-fifth session of the Council will be on the protection of indigenous human rights defenders,

Noting the half-day intersessional interactive dialogue, held on 15 July 2019, on ways to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples’ representatives and institutions in meetings of the Human Rights Council on issues affecting them, and awaiting the summary report to be prepared thereon by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, for submission to the Council prior to its forty-fourth session,

Recognizing the importance of free, prior and informed consent, as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,

Recognizing also the value and the diversity of the cultures and the form of social organization of indigenous peoples and their holistic traditional knowledge of their lands, natural resources and environment,

Noting that the General Assembly, in the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, affirmed and recognized the importance of indigenous peoples’ religious and cultural sites and of providing access to and repatriation of their ceremonial objects and human remains, as contemplated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,

Commending Member States, cultural and educational institutions, museums, indigenous peoples and civil society for their efforts to combat the illicit trade in indigenous peoples’ cultural property, and welcoming all initiatives, whether by States, institutions or private persons, for the voluntary return of indigenous peoples’ cultural property that has been illicitly appropriated,

Recognizing that agricultural practices that include indigenous knowledge can contribute to overcoming the combined challenges of climate change, food security, biodiversity conservation and combating desertification and land degradation,

¹³ A/HRC/17/31, annex.

¹⁴ A/HRC/39/17.

Recognizing also the importance of facilitating indigenous peoples' livelihoods, which may be achieved by, inter alia, the recognition of their traditions, adequate public policies and economic empowerment,

Recognizing further that the economic empowerment, inclusion and development of indigenous peoples, including through the establishment of indigenous-owned businesses, can enable them to improve their social, cultural, civil and political engagement, achieve greater economic independence and build more sustainable and resilient communities, and noting the contribution of indigenous peoples to the broader economy,

Concerned about the extreme disadvantages that indigenous peoples have typically faced across a range of social and economic indicators and about the impediments to their full enjoyment of their rights,

Stressing the need to pay particular attention to the rights and special needs of indigenous women, children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including in the process of protecting and promoting their equal access to justice,

Recalling its resolution 72/128 of 7 December 2017, entitled "Observer status for the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean in the General Assembly", in which it decided to invite the Fund to participate in the sessions and the work of the Assembly in the capacity of observer,

1. *Notes with appreciation the work of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the rights of indigenous peoples, takes note of the report of the Special Rapporteur,¹⁵ and encourages all Governments to respond favourably to her requests for visits;*

2. *Urges Governments and the United Nations system, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples through their representatives and institutions, to continue to implement, when appropriate, measures at the national level, including legislative, policy and administrative measures, to achieve the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples⁷ and to promote awareness of it among all sectors of society, including members of legislatures, the judiciary and the civil service, as well as among indigenous peoples, and invites international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates, national human rights institutions, where they exist, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, and other relevant actors to contribute to those efforts;*

3. *Underscores the importance of implementing the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples,⁸ and reiterates the commitment of Member States to cooperating with indigenous peoples, through their own representative institutions, to develop and implement national action plans, strategies or other measures, where relevant, to achieve the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;*

4. *Encourages the leadership of the Secretary-General and of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, as the responsible senior official of the United Nations system, in overseeing the implementation of and following up on the system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, raising awareness of the rights of indigenous peoples and increasing the coherence of the activities of the system in this regard, and encourages the funds, programmes and*

¹⁵ A/HRC/42/37.

specialized agencies of the United Nations system, resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to implement this plan in full alignment with national development needs and priorities;

5. *Encourages* Member States, resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, within their mandates and in coordination with the Governments concerned, to involve indigenous peoples regarding issues affecting them in the preparation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and country programme action plans;

6. *Encourages* Member States to work towards achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

7. *Encourages* those States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), of the International Labour Organization¹⁶ to consider doing so;

8. *Encourages* Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to continue to contribute to the trust fund on indigenous issues, the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Partnership, invites indigenous organizations and private institutions and individuals to do likewise, and notes the importance of accessibility, accountability, transparency and balanced geographical distribution in the management of these funds;

9. *Decides* to expand the mandate of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples so that it can assist representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations and communities in participating in the Forum on Business and Human Rights and in the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including in its preparatory sessions and in the meetings of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform Facilitative Working Group organized by the secretariat of the Convention, in accordance with their respective rules and regulations;

10. *Also decides* to continue to observe the International Day of Indigenous Peoples every year on 9 August, and requests the Secretary-General to support the observance of the Day from within existing resources;

11. *Encourages* Member States and all organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, the private sector and academia, as well as civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to observe the International Day of Indigenous Peoples in an appropriate manner, including through educational and public awareness-raising activities;

12. *Encourages* Member States to give due consideration to all the rights of indigenous peoples in fulfilling the commitments undertaken in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁹ and in the elaboration of national action plans and programmes as well as international and regional programmes, applying the pledge to leave no one behind and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first;

13. *Encourages* States to continue to consider including in their voluntary national reviews for the high-level political forum on sustainable development and their national and global reports information related to indigenous peoples on the progress made and challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, bearing in mind paragraphs 78 and 79 of the 2030 Agenda, and also encourages States to compile disaggregated data to measure progress and to ensure that no one is left behind;

¹⁶ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1650, No. 28383.

14. *Also encourages* States, according to their relevant national context and characteristics, to collect and disseminate data disaggregated by ethnicity, income, gender, age, race, migratory status, disability, geographic location or other factors, as appropriate, in order to monitor and improve the impact of development policies, strategies and programmes aimed at improving the well-being of indigenous peoples and individuals, to combat and eliminate violence and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against them and to support work towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda;

15. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to include information pertinent to indigenous peoples in the forthcoming annual reports on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals;

16. *Stresses* the need to strengthen the commitment of States and the entities of the United Nations system to mainstream the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples into development policies and programmes at the national, regional and international levels, and encourages them to give due consideration to the rights of indigenous peoples in achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda;

17. *Also stresses* the need for indigenous peoples of all regions to contribute to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, and encourages States to engage with indigenous peoples at the local, national and regional levels in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals;

18. *Invites* the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples to give due consideration, within their mandates, to the rights of indigenous peoples as related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

19. *Encourages* the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to continue to provide inputs on indigenous issues to the high-level political forum on sustainable development for consideration in its thematic reviews;

20. *Underlines* the need to intensify efforts, in cooperation with indigenous peoples, to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against indigenous women, children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities and to support measures that will ensure their empowerment and full and effective participation in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas and eliminate structural and legal barriers to their full, equal and effective participation in political, economic, social and cultural life;

21. *Reaffirms* the importance of effective accountability with regard to violence against indigenous women and girls, including sexual violence, domestic violence, abuse, exploitation and sexual harassment, as well as with regard to taking adequate measures to prevent and eliminate such violence;

22. *Invites* the Commission on the Status of Women to consider indigenous women's issues, among others, at its sixty-fourth session, to be held in 2020, to coincide with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and encourages Governments to cooperate with indigenous peoples at all levels on preparations for the 2020 review so as to benefit from their experience and expertise;

23. *Encourages* States to consider including in their reports related to indigenous peoples and women information on the progress made and challenges in the implementation of Commission on the Status of Women resolutions 49/7 of 11 March 2005, entitled "Indigenous women: beyond the ten-year review of the

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action”,¹⁷ and 56/4 of 9 March 2012, entitled “Indigenous women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication”;¹⁸

24. *Proclaims* the period 2022–2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, to draw attention to the critical loss of indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages and to take urgent steps at the national and international levels, and invites the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to serve as the lead agency for the International Decade, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, and other relevant agencies, within existing resources;

25. *Invites* Member States to consider establishing national mechanisms with adequate funding for the successful implementation of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages in partnership with indigenous peoples, and invites indigenous peoples, as custodians of their own languages, to initiate and develop appropriate measures for the implementation of the International Decade;

26. *Welcomes* the high-level event on the conclusion of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 17 December 2019, and encourages the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to submit a report on all activities relating to the International Year to the General Assembly in 2020;

27. *Encourages* Governments to redouble efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, both in legislation and in practice, in the context of respect for the human rights of indigenous children, including through international cooperation, as appropriate;

28. *Also encourages* Governments to promote actions to eliminate malnutrition of indigenous children, especially for those living in rural areas, by providing them with adequate food, water and sanitation, education, health and basic services, and to implement actions for poverty eradication;

29. *Encourages* transnational corporations and other business enterprises to respect human rights, including the rights of indigenous children, and to eliminate the worst forms of child labour from their operations;

30. *Underscores* the need to ensure equal protection of the law and equality before the courts for indigenous women and girls at all levels and, to that end, the importance of providing systematic gender-sensitivity training, as appropriate, for police and security forces, prosecutors, judges and lawyers, integrating gender considerations into security sector reform initiatives, developing protocols and guidelines and enhancing or putting in place appropriate accountability measures for adjudicators;

31. *Encourages* States and entities of the United Nations system to strengthen international cooperation, including to address the disadvantages faced by indigenous peoples, and to increase technical cooperation and financial assistance in this regard;

32. *Encourages* the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children’s Fund and other relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, in accordance with their mandates, to carry out research and evidence-gathering on the prevalence and root causes of suicide among indigenous youth and children and good practices on its prevention and to consider developing, as appropriate, strategies or

¹⁷ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum ([E/2005/27](#) and [E/2005/27/Corr.1](#)), chap. I, sect. D.

¹⁸ *Ibid., 2012, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum ([E/2012/27](#) and [E/2012/27/Corr.1](#)), chap. I, sect. D.

policies, consistent with national priorities, in cooperation with Member States, to tackle it, including through consultation with indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous youth organizations;

33. *Takes note with appreciation* of the work led by the Presidents of the General Assembly at its seventieth, seventy-first, seventy-second and seventy-third sessions in conducting consultations with Member States, indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions from all regions of the world and existing mechanisms of the United Nations on possible measures to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them, which led to the adoption of Assembly resolution [71/321](#) and its decision to continue its consideration of possible further measures necessary to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in relevant United Nations meetings on issues affecting them at its seventy-fifth session, taking into account the achievements in that regard of other bodies and organizations throughout the United Nations system, to be preceded by consultations with indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions from all regions of the world as an input to the intergovernmental process;

34. *Invites* Member States to support the Secretary-General in his efforts or activities to hold regional consultations, including through the regional commissions, as appropriate, before the nineteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, including by hosting such consultations, in accordance with resolution [71/321](#);

35. *Encourages* the United Nations system to strengthen cooperation with the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, considering its fundamental role in the Latin American and Caribbean region in processes of dialogue and consultation between States and indigenous peoples;

36. *Decides* to continue its consideration of the question at its seventy-fifth session, under the item entitled "Rights of indigenous peoples", and to maintain in the provisional agenda the sub-item entitled "Follow-up to the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples".

50th plenary meeting
18 December 2019