

STATEMENT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH

WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

20TH session
Agenda Item 6



The Committee on Indigenous Health warmly welcomes and greets the newly elected Chairperson for the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

Over the past year, the Committee on Indigenous Health has been active in addressing important and contemporary issues in the spirit of our mandate.

In May, the Committee participated in the first session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York City. For this, a written statement was prepared for the members which was sent in early to the Secretariat, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The briefing paper was designed to serve as a reference point for the commissioners of the Forum, many of whom had very little foreknowledge of the developments in this area of indigenous peoples and health. The recommendations made by the committee, which also made a supplementary oral statement, saw reflection in the recommendations of the Forum at the end of its first session although these interventions were not reported in the summary record of the proceedings.

During the first session of the Permanent Forum, the committee was informed by members of the Forum that WHO had sent in a draft "Participatory Management Guidelines for Indigenous Peoples and Research Institutions undertaking collaborative research in health." The draft was sent for comments from some of the members of the Forum.

The COIH suggests to this Working Group that it should recommend to WHO that all guidelines and policies that impact indigenous peoples should be as consistent with the Principles of Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples be developed with a Board and through a consultative process. Indigenous peoples around the world and especially through their self-identified and acknowledged representatives such as COIH should be closely consulted in

developing all such protocols and processes. We would like to remind WHO that the health of indigenous peoples is a matter that is integral to our survival as individuals and peoples. Respecting this, our rights to our own knowledge and our bodies a thorough and inclusive consultative principle and process should be followed by WHO in its immense endeavors in the area of indigenous peoples' health and rights to health.

The COIH firmly believes and has experienced over the years of our existence and efforts in this area of rights to health of indigenous peoples that the WGIP is a key platform in the promotion, development and establishment of indigenous peoples' health and rights to health in the world. Thank you Mr. Chairman.