SUMMARY NOTES ON THE 17TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

16th April – 27th April 2018, New York City

Information and methodology:

This summary is based on the notes taken during the conference and the statements collected by Docip services, available here. The discussions related in that document entail the first week only, from the 16th of April until the 20th of April 2018. Interactive dialogues of the 17th and Friday the 20th as well as the plenary sessions are related in this document, including the informal interactive hearing held with the President of the General Assembly on the 17th of April. The complete list of the current Permanent Forum members is available in Annex I and the list of abbreviations used in this document is available in Annex II.

1. Executive Summary

The seventeenth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) welcomed some changes in the format as decided by the Secretariat. During the previous years, the UNPFII was held over two weeks, mixed with closed meetings of Permanent Forum members, interactive hearings with United Nations (UN) agencies, plenary sessions and other events. The statements presented by representatives of indigenous peoples’ organizations should focus on the recommendations they have for the Permanent Forum members.

This year, the Permanent Forum members with the Secretariat decided to dedicate the first week to plenary sessions, including interactive dialogues, in order to provide more room for the delegates to express their situations on the ground. The aim is then for Permanent Forum members to draw on more specific and precise recommendations during the second week, during which Regional Dialogues were held – one dialogue per each indigenous region, the Arctic and the Russian Federation being held together.1

The first week was, in general, well-attended. On the first two days, since the conference room was too small to allow all delegates to participate, only two persons per organization were allowed in.

The discussion that raised most interest was the discussion of agenda item 8 on the collective rights to land, territories and resources. The statements made underlined the numerous times the jeopardization of indigenous lands, the criminalization of indigenous rights defenders and the dispossession of lands in the name of development have occurred. Some States do not yet recognize indigenous peoples in their countries and criminalize their leaders; the international indigenous rights standards cannot be applied there and dialogue with indigenous organizations should be open.

1 For more information on the regional dialogues, please see here.
Regarding the interactive discussion on the follow-up of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) outcome document on enhancing indigenous peoples' participation at the UN, indigenous peoples' representatives mostly expressed disappointment. They underlined the confusion around the status difference between indigenous representatives and organizations, and underlined the risk it entails in terms of legitimacy. In addition, the representatives who participated in this session asked for another status to be given to indigenous peoples within the UN system, especially during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

2. Details

Monday, 16 April

- Opening of the session, election of officers, adoption of the agenda and organization of work

At the opening of the session, a traditional indigenous musical act was performed by Saina from the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) located in the Russian Federation. M. Todadaho Sid Hill, Chief of the Onondaga Nation, delivered a welcome message which stressed indigenous peoples' link to natural resources and land as a spiritual matter and the urgent need for recognition of those rights. Mr. Brian Keane and Mr. Elifuraha Laltaika, members of the Permanent Forum, appointed Ms. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine who was reelected as the Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for its seventeenth session.

The opening statement was delivered by the President of the 72nd session of the General Assembly, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák. He first called upon the UN Charter, taking as an example the first sentence, 'We the people,' to express that it included indigenous peoples and that the UN system has lost track of the challenges faced on an everyday basis by indigenous peoples. He further expressed the willingness to keep the doors open for indigenous peoples to the UN system, notably in terms of development. He also underlined the positive advances made to engage more with indigenous peoples, taking as an example the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, the recent Conference of Water and the numerous partnerships on the ground between indigenous local organizations and the UN. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), stressed the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development. The role of the preservation of indigenous lands, territories and resources is crucial in the debate to preserve the future of indigenous peoples worldwide. She further invited States to collaborate more with indigenous peoples to learn from their experiences in terms of resource management. Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, insisted on the importance of identifying internal and external risks to best assess possible partnerships among indigenous peoples. He stressed the importance of the unity of the indigenous movement, which can accomplish major achievements such as the adoption by States of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). He also underscored the importance of now having the movement organized to face the many different private interests, referring to the private companies which are drilling indigenous lands currently. Indigenous lands, territories and resources are being jeopardized by globalization, and the preservation of future generations is achieved through the preservation of indigenous peoples' rights to lands.

Statements were made by Mr. Gervais Nzoa and Mr. Jesus Guadalupe Fuentes Blanco, members of the Permanent Forum for the election of the officers. The Forum elected Ms. Anne Nuorgam,

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2 A/RES/69/2. Outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples
Mr. Dmitri Harakka-Zaitsev, Ms. Tarcila Rivera Zea and Ms. Xiaoan Zhang as Vice-Chairs; and Mr. Brian Keane as Rapporteur of the seventeenth session by acclamation.

The Chair of the Permanent Forum then made a statement related to this seventeenth session. She first expressed the choice of having a first week with only plenary sessions and the second one with open meetings, in the format of a dialogue with UN agencies and expert members of the Permanent Forum in order to have a more efficient session and address the recommendations accordingly. She also reminded us of the importance of considering indigenous peoples’ rights in the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Mr. Elliott Harris, the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, Department for Economic and Social Affairs, expressed the urgent need to have an international community that is more open to and more inclusive of indigenous peoples worldwide.

- Follow-up on the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

As an introductory statement, Mr. Brian Keane outlined the initiatives and examples in the implementation of some recommendations realized by the Permanent Forum since its existence. He presented some examples of projects realized at the national level in Bolivia, Chile, Congo, Cambodia, Brazil, Mexico and also collaboration with UN agencies such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, Mr. Baskut Tuncak, explained its mandate and the work he has achieved by assessing the consequences of hazardous substances and wastes on indigenous lands and the relationship such consequences hold with UNDRIP. As such, indigenous peoples are severely damaged by such wastes, and face health issues from them. In addition, because there is currently no global policy regarding those substances, there are discriminatory practices among the States with regard to how to manage them. The lack of respect of the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples in that process is a key issue that needs to be addressed.

Guatemala presented the changes that have occurred in the collection of disaggregated data in order to have a more precise idea of the situation faced by indigenous peoples in reality and give them more visibility.

The International Indian Treaty Council pointed out the risks linked to sexual and reproductive health and the exposure of indigenous peoples to toxic substances. Its representative further expanded on the advocacy conducted to bring about a policy at the global level on the repatriation of ancestral remains. The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council of Australia pressed for a plan to be put in place to prevent the killings and violence committed against indigenous women and girls.

Mr. Tuncak addressed the above mentioned statements by stating that it was important to take measures and set up indicators to assess the poverty level and reduce existing gaps. Also, he congratulated the group on the results regarding repatriation and stated the importance of its follow-up.

- Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum, discussion on the International Year of Indigenous Languages

Ms. Aisa Mukabenova first outlined the recommendation made by the Permanent Forum to establish an International Year on Indigenous Languages, that will be held in 2019. Revitalization of indigenous
languages are a key issue to address, since they represent a particular system of knowledge and they are linked to the rights to lands, territories and resources. Representative from **UNESCO** presented the action plan for the International Year on Indigenous Languages\(^2\), following the meeting held in Paris in December 2017. As such, in order to organize the international year on indigenous languages, a Steering Committee will be nominated. The members could be chosen from the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) members, UNPFII members, as well as representatives from each of the seven socio cultural regions. For this year, the main three thematic areas on indigenous languages are: (1) to provide support to the revitalization of those languages; (2) to provide a better access to education and better information sharing on indigenous languages and (3) to maintain the value of indigenous languages at the political level.

Some **States** expressed their views under this agenda item. **Sweden (on behalf of the Nordic countries)** emphasized the engagement undertaken by Nordic countries to promote indigenous peoples’ rights and warned of the increasing attacks suffered by indigenous rights defenders. The **Plurinational State of Bolivia** discussed the deep link between indigenous languages and indigenous culture, and how they relate to each other. **Canada** underlined the fact that the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples is guaranteed by treaties and several partnerships, but recognized the need for indigenous peoples to have access to basic services in their own native languages. The **Russian Federation** presented the various programs undertaken to revitalize indigenous languages, notably for the Selkup people and in the Nenets autonomous area. **Mexico and Guatemala** expressed their support of the international year on indigenous languages and the need to consider it from the community perspective. **New Zealand** welcomed the acclamation of 2019 as the year of indigenous languages and underlined the necessity to consider it not only as an opportunity for States to implement policies, but as a duty. **Estonia** mentioned the importance of being part of the steering committee on the international year of indigenous languages as much as the relevance of this program for the recognition of indigenous cultures worldwide. **Australia** highlighted the importance of preventing violence committed against indigenous women and girls and endorsed the Action plan for the international year on indigenous languages.

A few **indigenous organizations** took the floor under this agenda item. The **Inuit Circumpolar Council** raised the lack of schooling in Inuktituk. The **Saami Parliament of Norway** presented a common language project to establish a policy among Saami people of Finland, Norway and Sweden and the need for continuous financial contributions to do so. The **Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East of the Russian Federation** recalled the importance for indigenous communities to speak their own language to their children. The **Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica** emphasized the need for less speeches and more concrete actions to be taken. **Congrès Mondial Amazigh** welcomed the international year on indigenous languages and stressed the lack of recognition of the Amazigh language. The **Organización de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonia Colombiana** underlined the criminalization of indigenous rights defenders in Colombia nowadays. The **Coordinating Committee of the Indigenous Peoples of Africa** urged that there be special assistance to revitalize indigenous languages in Africa as they are disappearing.

**Other organizations** took the floor under this agenda item. The **Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** presented its work related to the preservation of indigenous traditional knowledge through the organization of four regional workshops. The **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** explained the work conducted by the Intergovernmental Committee on Traditional Knowledge, Cultural Expressions and Genetical Resources towards a legally binding

instrument that would protect indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge. The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) emphasized the programs developed with indigenous groups according to their cultural specificities, with, for example, traditional ways of giving birth. The United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) presented a joint study realized with Chirapaq and the importance of preserving indigenous women's rights, including a gender-based violence response. The Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples discussed the crucial bridge that exists between indigenous languages and indigenous spirituality, as the transfer of indigenous traditional knowledge is key to ensuring the future of the youth and compliance with the SDGs.

Other experts from UN mechanisms on the rights of indigenous peoples took the floor. Mr. Jens Dahl, UNPFII expert, underscored the need for a language to be spoken at home and the necessity to put in place a global mechanism that would include all linguists and researchers who work on the preservation of indigenous languages. Mr. Alexey Tsykarev, EMRIP expert, on behalf of EMRIP, stressed the importance of the revitalization of indigenous languages and that efforts need to be made at both national and international levels.

Tuesday, 17 April

- Discussion on the theme “Indigenous peoples’ collective rights to lands, territories and natural resources”

Mr. Jens Dahl made an introductory statement for consideration of this point of the agenda⁴. He explained the relationship that indigenous peoples have with their homelands, which is interlinked with both the survival of their culture and the preservation of the ecosystems. Indigenous peoples’ land rights are inherent to the right to self-determination; however, ongoing threats continue to jeopardize indigenous peoples’ security. Indigenous peoples’ development is described as being opposed to general development. Global recommendations are the following: (1) to gather good practices in terms of self-determination; (2) enhanced collaboration with mechanisms on biodiversity and climate change and (3) organization of special and periodic meetings that would address the issues of indigenous development in a systemic way.

Numerous States took the floor to express their views under this agenda item. Mexico – on behalf of the Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples which includes Australia, Argentina, Brazil, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain, Finland, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Norway, New Zealand, Paraguay and Peru – expressed that indigenous peoples’ rights is a priority for those countries, and reiterated its commitment towards the respect of the right of free, prior and informed consent for projects directly affecting indigenous peoples’ lands and territories. El Salvador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, added to the previous statement that the priority for this group of States was also women and girls’ rights and protection. Canada gave the floor to a delegate from Nunavut who spoke on the facilitation of the right to self-determination by having self-governed territory for this region. The Plurinational State of Bolivia recognized indigenous peoples’ collective rights to land, territories and resources and the necessary empowerment of indigenous women to guarantee those rights. The European Union (EU) asserted its support for indigenous peoples’ rights and their access to lands and territories by several programs developed by the EU and its member States, including Council Conclusions adopted earlier this year. The Russian Federation, Panama, the United States and Australia introduced to

⁴ E/C.19/2018/7, International expert group meeting on the theme “Sustainable Development in the Territories of Indigenous Peoples”
the assembly the positive policies implemented for indigenous peoples’ land rights in-country. Cuba stated its support for more recognition of indigenous peoples’ rights and cultures.

The following indigenous organizations made statements. The Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East of the Russian Federation presented a project conducted with the Yamal Nenets that benefited indigenous peoples in their access to lands. Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia gave concrete data related to indigenous peoples’ land rights in Colombia. The Saami Parliament of Finland expressed concerns related to the insight of the right to free, prior and informed consent of the Saami people. The National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples stressed that national policies implemented by Australia were affecting the way indigenous peoples manage their own lands and territories. The Nacionalidad Zápara de Ecuador conveyed a spiritual message by speaking of the need to go back to connect with indigenous spirituality that has its roots within traditional lands. Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact exposed the threats suffered by indigenous peoples in Asia, mainly criminalization of indigenous rights defenders and the lack of respect of free, prior and informed consent. The Arctic Caucus urged States to establish national institutions that would gather data on indigenous lands and their frontiers to better define their territories. The Assembly of First Nations spoke of the necessity of establishing concrete mechanisms to respect indigenous peoples’ rights to free, prior and informed consent. The International Indigenous Women’s Forum warned about the difficult situation of indigenous women and girls during armed conflicts and forced evictions, as they are being more and more exposed to violence. The African Working Group on Indigenous Peoples called on a stronger recognition of customary land rights and land tenure.

Other organizations took the floor. The World Bank introduced the new social and environmental policy adopted by the World Bank in 2016 which entails a broader recognition of indigenous peoples’ rights and the respect of the right to free, prior and informed consent. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) spoke of the trainings conducted for indigenous peoples in order to achieve the SDGs. IFAD and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) underlined that the recognition of indigenous peoples’ land rights and their traditional knowledge would lead to more compliance with the SDGs with less poverty and more sustainable livelihoods. The United Nations Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises presented the work performed by the working group and the need for the States to consider more closely collaboration with indigenous peoples.

Experts from UN mechanisms on the rights of indigenous peoples expressed their views. Mr. Albert Barumé, Chair of EMRIP, expressed the lack of recognition of indigenous peoples’ rights to land, territories and resources, which is putting indigenous peoples’ livelihoods at risk. The next EMRIP study will be on the right to free, prior and informed consent. Mr. Gervais Nzoa reacted to the statement made by the World Bank by inviting this organization to engage more with indigenous communities worldwide and especially in Africa. Ms. Lourdes Tibán Guala insisted that States should adopt into their national legislation the policies adopted in UNDRIP, especially in terms of education and protection of indigenous rights defenders. Mr. Les Malezer highlighted that indigenous peoples’ rights to land also entails the access to natural resources. Ms Tarcila Rivera Zea underscored the lack of engagement of States with UNDRIP and the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention n°169.
Discussion on the theme “Indigenous peoples’ collective rights to lands, territories and natural resources” (continued)

This afternoon session started with a panel on “Opportunities and challenges for mapping and titling lands, territories and resources”. Mr. Shapiom Noningo Sen of the Autonomous Territorial Government of the Wampis Nation of Peru insisted on the importance of performing a mapping of indigenous lands to get more rights implemented and to help the communities at the technical level. Mr. Yon Fernandez de Larrinoa of the FAO added to the previous statement that the recognition of collective land rights has to go through the mapping of indigenous territories, especially when it comes to dealing with agriculture on those lands. Mr. Raja Devasish Roy, Chakma Circle Chief and member of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission, explained that in the context of Bangladesh, the land titles have been given to people recently arrived in the country and that the dialogue with the Land Commission is very difficult.

States made statements. New Zealand recognized the relationship of indigenous peoples to land and natural resources as a fundamental component of their identity. Nicaragua stated that indigenous peoples’ collective rights to land, territories and resources are already included in the national Constitution. Botswana presented the best practices followed in-country for the recognition of collective rights to lands and community led resources management. South Africa called for an international legally binding instrument on indigenous peoples’ rights and transnational corporations and enterprises. Guatemala asked for more concrete steps to be taken at the international level for UNDRIP to be implemented. Colombia noted that policies have been put in place to respect indigenous peoples’ right to free, prior and informed consent. Bangladesh underlined that the Commission on land rights in this country will cause traditional land rights of indigenous peoples to prevail, and that land conflicts are a real problem. Paraguay presented its national plan for more recognition of indigenous culture and stated that indigenous peoples’ collective rights are recognized by the Constitution. El Salvador and Nepal expressed that an institutional national space has been created to enhance the dialogue with indigenous peoples. The Dominican Republic, Chile and Costa Rica expressed their faith in a good dialogue with indigenous representatives, along with the need to take more measures to respect their rights to self-determination. Greenland introduced some legislation which states that the sub-surface resources are the property of Greenland.

Statements were also made by the representatives of the following indigenous organizations. The Nation of Hawaii claimed that the United States government needs to fulfill its obligations with regards to the reconciliation process in Hawaii as the nation of Hawaii seeks justice and apologies. Border Center for Support and Consulting of Egypt raised the issue of the Nubian people in the South of the country and the problems of land grabbing that they face. The Saami Council warned of the lack of protection of the Saami people in the North of the country, which are at the forefront of climate change. Union of BC Indian Chiefs of Canada denounced the violation of indigenous peoples’ rights to land, territories and resources in Canada and further recommended the addition of a permanent recommendation to countries to have those rights respected. National Indigenous Women Forum of Nepal asked the country to stop forced evictions and to have a dialogue with indigenous peoples, by establishing more rules to protect their lands. New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council of Australia, Yoingu Nation and Aboriginal Rights Coalition of Australia and National Congress of Australia First Peoples warned on the violence committed against indigenous peoples and that the UNPFII should act as facilitator of the dialogue with the country. Anipa-Red Indigena Nacional de Mexico pointed out the militarization of indigenous lands in Mexico and the criminalization of indigenous rights defenders. Global Indigenous Peoples Caucus asked for a greater respect of the right to free, prior and informed consent and for a guarantee to the access to
justice. **AIM – West** raised the case of mining companies on indigenous lands, which are destroying their culture.

**Other organizations** took the floor. The **Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines** asked that the ongoing criminalization of indigenous peoples’ rights defenders in this country be stopped. The **Indigenous and Conserved Communities Area (ICCA) Consortium** insisted on the collaboration within CBD and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes in order to safeguard indigenous peoples’ livelihoods. **MADRE** recommended safeguarding indigenous peoples’ traditional ways of feeding instead of those being substituted by other kind of food.

**Mr. Jens Dahl** and **Mr. Les Malezer**, members of the Permanent Forum, made statements. **Mr. Dahl** raised some questions on how to guarantee the right to self-determination and the creation of more self-governing territories. **Mr. Malezer** expressed the willingness of the expert members to edit the best recommendations on this crucial issue for indigenous peoples.

- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

An introductory statement was presented by **Mr. Elifuraha Laltaika** on this topic\(^5\) which explained the double role played by indigenous peoples for the fulfilment of the SDGs. **Ms. Helena del Carmen Yáñez Loza, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ecuador** expressed how national policies can have positive achievements for indigenous peoples’ rights and the fulfillment of the SDGs. **Ms. Marion Barthelemy, Director of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs** presented the work performed during the high level political forum on the SDGs and the compromise undertaken by States to make sure that no one is left behind. **Ms. Joan Carling of the Tebtebba Foundation** explained that the implementation plans for the SDGs remained unclear to many indigenous peoples and there is a greater need for raising awareness in the communities to get involved in this process.

**States** participated in the interactive dialogue. **Canada and Denmark (on behalf of the Nordic countries)** insisted on the importance of leaving no one behind. **Guatemala, Chile and Guyana** presented its national development plan, which has an intercultural aspect to make sure that indicators comply with indigenous peoples’ needs. **The Russian Federation** explained how important it is to maintain indigenous peoples’ traditional ways of life. **New Zealand** stated its willingness to have inclusion of all people in the country’s policies.

The representatives of several **indigenous organizations** also participated. **The Arctic Center** proposed a revision of the SDGs to make them fit the reality lived in the Arctic region right now. **New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council of Australia** explained their willingness to keep collaborating with the government for the implementation of the SDGs. **The International Indian Treaty Council** stated that the inclusion of indigenous peoples in the SDGs process is essential. **The Federación Binacional Zápara de Ecuador y Perú** explained that for them, it was about sustainable development. **The Parlamento Mapuche de Argentina** asked the UN to fight against impunity and seek justice for the killing of indigenous rights defenders. **The Inuit Circumpolar Council of Greenland** wants to stress the lack of teaching of the native languages in schools, which does not appear in the SDGs.

**Other organizations** expressed their views in this discussion. The observer of the **Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC)** pointed out a plan put in place by this organization that would make sure that the States assume the compromises

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\(^5\) E/C.19/2018/2, Update on indigenous peoples and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
taken under the banner of the SDGs. The representative of the World Bank ensured that it would work on strengthening the indicators related to indigenous peoples and compliance by their partners.

From the Permanent Forum experts, Ms. Tarcila Rivera Zea emphasized the fact that the mechanisms related to the 2030 Agenda needed to be strengthened and the focus needs to be put on human rights, rather than of development only. Mr. Brian Keane reiterated the need to have a space given to indigenous peoples to participate in the decision-making processes without leaving anyone behind.

- Interactive dialogue with the President of the General Assembly on enhancing indigenous peoples’ participation at the UN

The President of the 72nd session of the General Assembly, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák gave an introductory statement. He discussed the historical path of indigenous peoples’ participation within the UN, by explaining that there is a gap in the implementation phase and that much more effort needs to be made to enforce indigenous peoples' participation in the UN meetings that affect them. The point of this meeting is to hear indigenous peoples’ suggestions to be submitted to the General Assembly and to start negotiation with States. Mr. Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, acknowledged the lack of respect of indigenous peoples' rights and the need to give them more space within the UN system. The situation of indigenous rights defenders is becoming more difficult every day and it is thus important to keep working closely with States to address this issue. Ms. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine, Chair of UNPFII, denounced that indigenous peoples’ participation within the UN system was limited to the mechanisms related to their rights such as UNPFII and EMRIP. There is a problem with an international recognition of indigenous institutions as such at the global level, not as NGOs, but as self-governments. Mr. Chief Wilton Littlechild, from the Cree Parliament, expressed its disappointment in those negotiations which have not reached an agreement so far. He further explained that one of the main problem is that States provide recognition of indigenous status at the national legal level. This leaves less space for non-recognized indigenous peoples to participate in meetings on issues affecting them. The right to self-determination is the most important right we can provide to indigenous communities. Mrs. Mirna Cunningham, from FILAC, suggested that the Permanent Forum should have a special status in the UNGA, with the right to perform interventions and ensure representation of its expert members to high-level events. As such, it would require a strengthening of UNPFII and the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples, as much as a coordination mechanism for the three mechanisms on indigenous peoples' rights. She further spoke of the need to provide accreditation to indigenous governments.

Some States participated in this interactive hearing. Finland reminded the assembly of its support to indigenous peoples' participation at the global level, including national and regional consultations. Canada, also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, affirmed the engagement of those three countries towards facilitation of indigenous peoples' participation in all UN meetings affecting them, especially of women and girls. The UE affirmed its commitment towards more indigenous peoples in meetings affecting them. Ecuador recognized that a new status, different of the NGO one, should be given to indigenous peoples and their organizations as indigenous knowledge is transversal to many topics discussed at the international level. Mexico underlined the need to strengthen the space already given to indigenous delegates, with the need to respect local specificities. The Russian Federation suggested that the already existing mechanisms be enforced and that the expert members in the UN meetings on issues affecting indigenous peoples should intervene. Brazil proposed that the selection criteria for indigenous participation at the UN should take into account cultural elements and self-identification as indigenous peoples. Indonesia and the UE affirmed its commitment towards more indigenous peoples' participation at the UN level.
Representatives from indigenous organizations expressed their views in this dialogue. A joint statement of various indigenous organizations from the Arctic region expressed their great disappointment with the work realized by the UN since 2007 on this topic. They asked UNGA to renew its commitment towards indigenous peoples and their rights to participate in UN meetings affecting them, at the same level as other entities. The representative of an indigenous organization from Canada stressed the slow process of indigenous peoples’ participation in UN meetings and recalled articles 17 and 18 of UNDRIP that guarantee indigenous peoples’ voices in the resolutions that affect them. Representative of an indigenous organization of the Batwa people from Burundi suggested that the principle of equality should be ensured and respected, with the creation of a mechanism that represents indigenous peoples from the seven different indigenous regions. The representative of an indigenous organization of Native American people from USA reminded the assembly of the criteria already identified by indigenous peoples, such as eligibility criteria that should be flexible and should correspond to indigenous peoples’ reality. The representative of an indigenous organization of the Crimean Tatars from Ukraine proposed holding hearings every three months concerning indigenous peoples who are under greater stress, facing conflicts or natural disasters. Another representative of an indigenous organization of Native American people from USA asked for a new status for indigenous peoples’ organizations to the UN. The representative of an indigenous organization from Africa hoped that the participation of indigenous women from Africa would be enhanced, notably through the Voluntary Fund. The representative of an indigenous organization of Maori people from New Zealand noted that this work should be done on the basis of UNDRIP articles and that the process started five years ago should be continued. Another representative of an indigenous organization of the Maori people from New Zealand pointed out that indigenous peoples’ participation to the UN was dominated by States, which is going against their right to self-determination. The representative of an indigenous organization from West Papua claimed the need to organize a referendum for the independency of West Papua. The representative from an indigenous organization from India stressed the lack of recognition of indigenous peoples’ rights in India. The representative of an indigenous organization of the Metis Nation from Canada spoke of its efforts to ensure their participation in decision-making processes at the regional level. The representative of an indigenous organization from Africa warned that States were blocking indigenous peoples’ participation in international bodies. The representative of an indigenous organization from Bangladesh underlined the need for the UN to have an open door to the traditional governing bodies of indigenous peoples. The representative of an indigenous organization from Latin America raised the issue of the lack of participation of indigenous representatives when indigenous peoples’ rights and mechanisms are being adopted by States.

Mr. Miroslav Lajčák thanked all the participants for their involvement and underlined the disappointment expressed by several indigenous delegates about the process.

Wednesday, 18 April

- Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples with regards to indigenous human rights defenders

Introductory statements have been made under this agenda item by, firstly, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (SRRIP), Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz. Indigenous peoples are at the forefront of climate change, due to the fact that they are among the most vulnerable communities in the world. She also updated the audience about her recent work, and expressed a concern about the lack of an answer from some States to her communications. There is a need to put greater emphasis on the analysis of criminalization of indigenous peoples’ rights defenders, especially taking into account...
the spiritual aspect of their lives. Mr. Adama Dieng, Under-Secretary-General and Special Advisor of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, also expressed concerns regarding indigenous peoples’ situation worldwide. The respect of the right to free, prior, and informed consent as much as full engagement in the decision-making processes are key for indigenous peoples’ development. States have a direct responsibility for the prevention of atrocious crimes, and the strengthening of the institutions is very important for that end. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Mr. Andrew Gilmour, insisted on the importance of having indigenous peoples’ voices heard, and for them to raise their voices when an incident occurs in the field.

States took part in the interactive dialogue. Mexico pointed out the excellent collaboration that the country has with the SRRIP. Canada and Australia stressed their support towards the SRRIP. The Russian Federation and Chile underlined some national policies put in place for indigenous peoples to enjoy their traditional cultures. Guatemala stated that the SRRIP would perform a country visit during the month of May. The United States claimed to be in disagreement with recommendations issued by the SRRIP in her country visit’s report of 2017. The Philippines expressed that there would be derogations of the right to self-determination in case of climate change emergencies. Spain expressed its support of indigenous peoples’ issues, mainly by supporting indigenous organizations for the right to free, prior and informed consent. Peru explained its national policies for a greater recognition of indigenous languages. Brazil reaffirmed its support of human rights defenders. The European Union pointed out some initiatives to monitor the protection of human rights defenders on the ground.

The representatives of the following indigenous organizations also participated. Ika Voyaging Trust underscored the problems faced by the Maori community due to the doctrine of discovery. The Finnish Saami Youth Organization warned of the consequences of a railway that would be built on Saami lands. State of Utah Dine Bikeyah underlined the need for protection of sacred lands, knowledge and cultural sites, including burial monuments. Congrès Mondial Amazigh claimed that impunity has become a rule in Morocco and Algeria with regard to the violation of indigenous peoples’ rights. Coordinación y Convergencia Maya of Guatemala denounced the arrests of indigenous rights defenders in this country. Mancomunidad de Comunidades Rio Beni, Quiquibey y Tuichi of the Plurinational State of Bolivia warned the audience about a dam construction that would affect five communities, without any respect to the right to free, prior and informed consent. Ogaden Youth and Students Union of Ethiopia warned of the situation faced by the people in Ethiopia and the repression that human rights defenders suffer once they return home. People of Long House of Canada denounced the selective methods of the States in holding consultations with indigenous peoples. International Indian Treaty Council raised the case of Leonard Peltier and asked for his release. The Amazigh Caucus emphasized the importance of the SRRIP to carry out country visits and urged her to make a country visit to Morocco and Algeria. Maori Law Society of New Zealand and New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council of Australia warned of the criminalization of indigenous peoples and the lack of development they suffer. Coalition of Indigenous Peoples warned of the lack of cooperation of States and private companies in complying with their promises to indigenous peoples. Univata Tribal People of Brazil warned of the situation faced by indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation in Brazil and the increasing risks they face for their security.

The representative of ILO also participated in the interactive discussion by stating that the organization has increased its efforts towards indigenous peoples. Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation suggested that a guide on best practices and the challenges of indigenous peoples be created.
Expert members of UNPFII raised some issues before the panelists. Mr. Jens Dahl asked Mr. Gilmore what to do when indigenous peoples return home and are being harassed; there is a need for assessment of this. He also asked about the measures to be taken in African countries with relation to the prevention of genocide. Ms. Lourdes Tiban Guala claimed that the lack of funding was giving less voice to indigenous peoples and that States were in a sense hindering their participation.

The panelists closed the session. Mr. Gilmore explained that when States criminalize indigenous rights defenders, they blame the people because of the violations of national regulations. Ms. Taufiq Corpuz underlined the point that the sacred protected areas of indigenous peoples are the most jeopardized, and those areas are going to be the most vital because of climate change and, of course, for natural resources. She further thanked the support received in her situation of being called a terrorist by the government of the Philippines. Indigenous peoples nowadays suffer the collateral effects of impunity and corruption. Mr. Dieng recalled that indigenous peoples are victims of attacks because of the interests of the private sector and administration. It is important to recall the right to self-determination, as it does not entail the right of States to self-determination: we speak here about actors inside the States and how they can influence policy making.

- Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples with regards to indigenous human rights defenders

Mr. Albert Barumé, EMRIP Chair, made an introductory statement. He presented the recent work performed by EMRIP on the good practices linked to UNDRIP and access to financial systems. He further discussed the country visits conducted by EMRIP in Finland and Mexico, and expressed the wish to institutionalize the relationship with States. He made a call for further engagement of those processes from indigenous youth. Mr. Gabor Rona, the Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, recognized that the private forces that work for extractive industries committed excesses and even violence on indigenous peoples. There had been some efforts to identify good practices and a code of conduct. Mr. Binota Moy Dhamai, the Chair of the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, explained that the fund benefits indigenous delegates who otherwise would not be able to come to the UN. It is also beneficial since the beneficiaries from the Fund use the various mechanisms to effectively raise their claims and learn from the system.

A few States took the floor under this agenda item. Finland (on behalf of the Nordic countries) expressed the need for States to meet UNDRIP obligations, and encourage a further collaboration between the three mechanisms on indigenous peoples’ rights. Mexico congratulated EMRIP for the theme of its next study and linked it to the policies realized in-country. The Russian Federation, through its Ombudsmen, expressed that among the 193 peoples of Russia, they all have the same access to their rights, independent of where they live. Ukraine gave the floor to a delegate from Crimea who invited the SRRIP to conduct a country visit in Crimea and encouraged her to prepare a report on the situation of this people. The Philippines reiterated the rationale of having the SRRIP tagged as terrorist and left the burden of the proof to her. Japan wanted to react to a statement made by indigenous peoples of Asia and expressed that the government respected the traditions of the Okinawa people.

Indigenous organizations also made statements. ECUARUNARI of Ecuador claimed that there is a greater need to consider indigenous peoples who live in conflict areas. First People of the Kalahari asked for a recognition of the Bushmen people in Botswana and their rights. Associação Dos Povos Indígenas Karipuna and Associação Xavante Wara of Brazil warned of the land grabbing suffered
by indigenous peoples in Brazil. **Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact** spoke of the criminalization of indigenous peoples’ rights defenders in Asia. **Crimean Tatar Youth Center** asked for international community support to help this people face the violation of their rights on the ground. **Indigenous Peoples Organization of Australia** made a statement in support of the SRRIP and asked the government of the Philippines to take her name off the list of terrorists. **Saami Parliament in Finland** discussed the positive outcome of the EMRIP visit to Finland and some technical devices that EMRIP provided to the Saami Parliament. **Global Indigenous Youth Caucus** raised the lack of education in the native indigenous language and asked for more empowerment of indigenous youth. **Endorois Welfare Council** warned that more than eighty thousand people have been displaced in this country because of criminal bands. **Parlamento Rapa Nui** explained that it was forced to give up lands to the government of Chile. **Coalition on the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples** stated that indigenous peoples have begun to use UNDRIP in the courts. **Comisión de Juristas Indígenas en la República Argentina** warned of the violence committed against indigenous women and girls, and urged the government of Argentina to do something about it. **Congress of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada** pointed out the situation of indigenous peoples who are not being recognized by the State and thus cannot benefit from special policies dedicated to them. **Consejo Regional Indígena del Medio Amazonas, Confederación Indígena Tayrona of Colombia and Organización de Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonía Colombiana** asked for the restitution of lands in Colombia and for respect of the law, with a greater emphasis on the respect of the right to free, prior and informed consent and self-determination. **Mohawk Language Custodians Association** raised the issue of indigenous peoples-determined from trauma inherited from the past, and suggested that there be access to archives for restorative justice. **Metis Settlements General Council of Canada** asked for formal recognition from the government of Canada. **Tonatierra** would like to see a strengthening of the SRRIP mandate. **Indigenous World Association** suggested an enforcement of indigenous peoples’ social structures and more ratification of the ILO Convention nº169. **AIM WEST – International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee** argued for release of Mr. Leonard Peltier. **Centro de Estudios Multidisciplinarios Aymara** stressed the criminalization suffered by indigenous youth and suggest using the new EMRIP mandate to take actions to avoid such situations. **Congrès Mondial Amazigh** stated that armed militias were killing Touareg people in Mali and Algeria, and that people from Libya were prevented from coming to UNPFII. **The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations of Canada** described the situation of impunity following the crime committed against an indigenous leader in Canada.

**Mr. Jens Dahl** made a recommendation directly to UNESCO, which is to maintain the names that the community themselves use, and not the ones that have been given to them. **Ms. Anne Nuorgam** urged the government of the Philippines to stop its allegations against the SRRIP, and further stated that she looked forward to the results of discussions between the Saami Parliament and EMRIP.

In his closing remarks, **Mr. Barumé** expressed the urgent need to facilitate the dialogue between States and indigenous peoples and said he looked forward to EMRIP’s new mandate to make it happen. **Ms. Tauli-Corpuz** reiterated her demand to have her name taken off the list of terrorists in her country and thank everyone for the support received. **Mr. Dhamai** made a call for further contributions from States to the Voluntary Fund.

*Thursday, 19 April*

- Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Implementing 16 projects for indigenous women and girls in remote areas.

Support and protection regarding the difficult situation faced by indigenous women and girls.

An introductory statement was made by Ms. Tarcila Rivera Zea, member of the Permanent Forum. She spoke of the lack of proper existing institutions to address the specific issue of indigenous women. There are two main areas that need to be looked at: in the first place, the collective rights to land, territories and resources of indigenous women and in the second place, the role they have with regards to community resilience and climate change. The representative of UNFPA expressed that among the 178 recommendations made to States on the issue of indigenous women and girls, only 33 States presented reports. A joint project conducted in Peru with Chirapaq showed that indigenous women have less access to health care. Ms. Terri Henry stressed the continuing problem of the killing of Native American women, and the violence they suffer in the reservations.

Statements were made by States. Namibia expressed that it was difficult to obtain data from remote communities. Brazil explained its health care program for remote indigenous communities. Viet Nam, Norway, the United States and Ecuador presented some programs that have been put in place for the promotion of indigenous languages. Finland stressed that the development of the Arctic region was one of the country’s priorities, in consultation with Saami people. South Africa introduced the partnerships established with UN agencies to tackle problems identified in-country, such as land reform. Chile explained new strategies put in place to prevent violence against women and girls, through the creation of a new Ministry on Indigenous Affairs. Bangladesh, Guyana and the Philippines presented national initiatives for the promotion of indigenous peoples’ rights. Denmark underlined the need to include more indigenous youth in the decision-making processes.

Indigenous organizations took the floor. Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations of Canada, Blackstar Community for Better Living Initiative Inc. of Canada and Canada World Youth pointed out the suffering of indigenous peoples in this country and asked for more repairation measures. Asia Indigenous Peoples and Asia Indigenous Peoples Caucus raised the issue of the lack of recognition of indigenous peoples in Asian countries and denial of their rights. Pueblo Kichwa de Sarayaku of Ecuador warned the audience of the threats suffered by the Sarayaku people due to pressure from oil and mining companies. International Indian Treaty Council recommended that FAO and UNPFII undertake a study on the effects of pesticides among indigenous peoples. Comisión de la Juventud ECMIA stressed the importance of guaranteeing rights to indigenous women and youth. Global Indigenous Youth Caucus warned of the water crisis suffered by a community in Wisconsin. Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti asked for respect of the Chittagong agreements. Tonatierra wanted to see more actions and less words. Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People warned of the violent situation faced by the young Tatars in Crimea. The Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East of the Russian Federation expressed its support towards indigenous youth in Russia. New Zealand Nurses Organization raised the issue of discrimination against indigenous Maori women. Adivasi Ekta Parishad of India called for ratification of ILO Convention 169 and recognition of indigenous peoples in country. National Aboriginal Council of Midwives of Canada would like to see a recognition of native traditional knowledge and ways of giving birth. World Sindhi Congress spoke of the situation of indigenous peoples in Pakistan. Passionist International denounced the continuous violations of indigenous peoples’ rights in the Philippines. Ogaden Peoples Rights Organization of Ethiopia raised the problem of forced cultural assimilation of the Ogaden people. International Indigenous Working Group on HIV and AIDS claimed the need for a greater coordination to fight against HIV and AIDS among indigenous populations.

Statements were also made by other organizations. IFAD stated that the organization is currently implementing 16 projects for indigenous women and girls in remote areas. ILO presented projects with relation to indigenous women that work in difficult areas and conditions. UN Women asserted its support and protection regarding the difficult situation faced by indigenous women and girls. FAO
introduced to the assembly a project performed in Mexico, with these main areas: there is a need for more data on the participation of indigenous women in politics, and to have more policies that include interculturality in their programs. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) decided to introduce, through its reform in 2016, a new category of member, the indigenous organizations category. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) raised concerns about land access for indigenous peoples and launched initiatives to protect environmental rights. Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines claimed that national law on indigenous peoples’ rights should have a focus on indigenous women and girls and indigenous persons with disabilities. Conselho Indigenista Missionário of Brazil recommended that the Forum conduct a study on the threats and situation of the indigenous peoples living in the Amazon. Minority Rights Group underlined the lack of available disaggregated data to measure access to health services by indigenous peoples. Global Embassy Peace Activists pointed out that priority should be given to education. Cultural Survival of Nepal stressed the important role played by indigenous media, which provide education on indigenous languages and better access to information. Docip presented the results of the implementation of the recommendation nº73 of 2009, regarding the development of oral history and memory workshops among the seven indigenous regions.

- Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues considered by the Economic and Social Council and emerging issues

Mr. Sam Johnston of the Green Climate Fund introduced this session by presenting the latest results of the Fund, and noting the crucial role of indigenous peoples in the fight for climate change. Within this Fund, 33 projects are closely related to indigenous issues. Mr. Eduardo Brondizio of the Intergovernmental Science - Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, presented the latest work performed by the IPBES platform to exchange knowledge and to protect biodiversity. Ms. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine stated that indigenous peoples are the guardians of biodiversity and are at the forefront of climate change. This topic has become a priority for the Permanent Forum.

States expressed their views. Guatemala recognized the need to involve more indigenous women in the decision-making process. Mexico explained the changes realized by the government in the electoral system that answer indigenous peoples’ requests. The Russian Federation stated that their priority was to create protected areas in the Arctic region. The Plurinational State of Bolivia suggested renaming the Permanent Forum, ‘Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights’. New Zealand recognizes indigenous peoples’ role in the fight against climate change. Canada (also on behalf of Australia) supported a greater participation of indigenous peoples in the UN meetings affecting them.

Indigenous organizations also took the floor. Native Youth Alliance asked for more access to natural resources and more international protection of them. Sengwer Indigenous Peoples of Kenya asked the UE and Finland to stop financing forest exploitation on ancestral indigenous lands which are being stressed. The Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East of the Russian Federation called for the recognition of indigenous traditional knowledge that could help scientific research. Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti of Bangladesh underlined the lack of implementation and measures by the Land Commission to settle land conflicts. United Confederation of Taíno People of Puerto Rico warned of their difficult situation, which jeopardizes their security and their lives. Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia suggested the creation of an international tribunal to examine violations of indigenous peoples’ rights. Forest Peoples’ Program stressed that the collaboration with indigenous communities is in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. Congrès Mondial Amazigh denounced human rights violations committed against
the Amazigh people and called on the Permanent Forum to protect more indigenous rights defenders. **International Indian Treaty Council** made a statement about the second World Indigenous Games that took place in July 2017 in Alberta. **Flying Eagle Woman Fund of Canada** stated that natural resources should be considered living beings and not objects available on the market place. **Chittagong Hill Tracts Jumma Refugees’ Welfare Association** called upon the government of Bangladesh to take measures for the protection for indigenous peoples. **Organización de Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonía Colombiana** emphasized the role of indigenous women in the preservation of traditional knowledge and the collective memory of the people.

Only two **other organizations** took the floor. The **International Organization of Migration (IOM)** stated that migration and climate change are crucial issues to be addressed in our time, and indigenous peoples have a fundamental role to play in it. The **United Nations Development Program (UNDP)** presented some partnerships created with indigenous peoples to mitigate climate change impacts on the communities.

**Friday, 20 April**

- Follow-up to the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

**Mr. Alvaro Pop**, Executive Secretary of FILAC and Co-Chair of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues presented the recent developments made by the FILAC and especially the Plan for Latin America. This plan has been adopted in collaboration with States and indigenous organizations. **The Deputy Chef de Cabinet of the Office of the President of the 72nd session of the General Assembly, Ms. Sofia Borges, spoke of** the positive outcomes of the negotiations between States and indigenous peoples throughout the years. Now the next step is to enhance indigenous peoples’ participation in the UN system, and to have another dialogue on indigenous youth employment. **Ms. Melanie Benjamin, Chief Executive of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe**, recalled the importance of indigenous peoples’ participation in the UN system and suggested four proposals: (1) to ask for a new status for indigenous organizations at the UN; (2) accreditation of the indigenous UN mechanisms to the UNGA; (3) participation of indigenous delegates in all matters that concern them; (4) enhancement of indigenous peoples’ governments in all those international meetings and not only with independent experts.

Numerous **States** expressed their views under this agenda item. **Finland (on behalf of Nordic and Baltic Countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania)** affirmed the importance of indigenous peoples’ participation in UN meetings and called upon Member States to take concrete steps. **Namibia** expressed its support towards marginalized communities and presented national policies developed in that sense. **Australia** expressed an interest in closing the gap of aboriginal participation in decision-making processes on issues affecting this people. **New Zealand** affirmed the commitment of the country to work in collaboration with the Maori people. **South Africa** called for the adoption of a Convention on indigenous peoples’ rights among Member States. **Mexico** presented its role in advancing indigenous peoples’ rights and participation at the global level, including co-chairing the resolution for the new EMRIP’s mandate. **Chile, Guatemala, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and El Salvador** introduced its national policies for the respect of indigenous peoples’ rights in the country. **Paraguay** underlined the measures taken to adhere to paragraph 8 of the WCIP outcome document in promoting dialogue between indigenous communities and the State. **The Russian Federation** wondered how it would be possible to legitimize indigenous peoples’ participation according to the different cultural contexts in which they live. **Pakistan** considers human rights is an important topic to be examined, by highlighting equal access of
all to the same opportunities. The EU informed the audience of the new policies adopted by the EU to recognize indigenous peoples’ rights at the European level and facilitate their participation in the EU related-mechanisms.

Statements were also made by the representatives of the following indigenous organizations: Indigenous People Law and Policy Program of the University of Arizona denounced the violations of its tribal rights by border keepers between USA and Mexico due to the project of the wall construction between the two countries. New Zealand Drug Foundation recommended that an enquiry into structural racism in the justice system should be undertaken. The L’auravetl’an Information and Education Network of Indigenous People asked for more resources for the preservation of indigenous languages. Asia Indigenous People’s Pact and Asia Indigenous People’s Caucus pointed out the need to strengthen indigenous peoples’ participation in meetings on issues that concern them, at all levels. Saami Parliament in Finland, Sweden and Norway, in a joint statement, denounced the lack of implementation of national action plans for indigenous peoples and asked for a greater independence of those governing bodies. Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica reminded the audience of the importance of remembering the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Metis Settlements General Council of Canada denounced the violation of the treaties signed between the tribes and the government and called for a greater respect of natural resources by establishing dialogue. Nation of Hawai’i explained the collaboration that Hawai’i has in general created with the authorities by choosing a community-led solution, even though there is a lack of consultation with the people regarding crucial land matters. University of Alaska recalled the necessity of enhancing indigenous peoples’ participation in the UN meetings that affect them. Finnish Saami Youth Organization stressed the lack of available data for the well-being of the Saami communities in Finland and called the government to strengthen Saami traditional mechanisms. Blackstar Community for Better Living Initiative Inc. introduced an indigenous initiative to enforce the right to water of indigenous communities as provided by article 25 of UNDRIP. Confederación Indígena Tayrona of Colombia pointed out the suffering of the community living in a conflict area. Congrès Mondial Amazigh called for a participation of indigenous peoples in all UN mechanisms and meetings affecting them, with an observer status to the UNGA. Union of BC Indian Chiefs claimed that States should work in close collaboration with indigenous peoples to achieve their national action plans. The Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East of the Russian Federation pointed out the importance of the WCP outcome document, which is a good legal basis for the protection of indigenous peoples’ in Russia. Batani Foundation of the Russian Federation underlined the problems faced by indigenous rights defenders in Russia and the pressure they suffer, with violations of indigenous peoples’ rights. Elleyada asked the States to open the debate on a Convention on indigenous peoples’ rights. Aadivasi Ekta Parishad of India flagged the lack of respect of indigenous peoples’ rights in India and their defenders, who are at risk. Llancaill Araucania of Chile expressed disappointment in the processes, since justice is only in favor of business enterprises on mapuches’ lands.

Other organizations expressed their views. UNESCO presented UNESCO’s policies on indigenous issues, notably through the respect of UNDRIP articles in their projects. ILO underlined that the ratification of ILO Convention nº 169 allows for a change of national rules, and stressed its participation with indigenous communities in Latin America and with FILAC. Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines presented a report on human rights violations against a community in the Philippines. National Human Rights Commission of Nepal called for more actions on indigenous peoples’ rights in Nepal.
Some expert members took the floor. Ms. Terri Henry recalled the importance of grassroots leadership and of conducting consultations with indigenous peoples to enhance their participation in the UN mechanisms. Mr. Les Malezer stressed the lack of follow-up in the implementation of the WCIP outcome document, especially in terms of indigenous peoples’ participation in the UN system. Mr. Jens Dahl expressed a concern over indigenous institutions, as there is a great difference in how indigenous peoples are organized in the different regions. It would be good to have a common definition about this topic, with a common ground of all indigenous peoples. Mr. Jesus Guadalup Fuentes Blanco pointed out the importance of reaching consensus in order to take measures, and thanked the FILAC for its work conducted in close collaboration with States and indigenous organizations. There is an increasing need to identify the proper way to establish solutions in an efficient manner.

- **Dialogue with indigenous peoples**

The theme of this interactive dialogue was indigenous peoples’ land rights. The aim of this hearing was for Permanent Forum members to hear more recommendations and learn of situations from the indigenous delegates present in the room.

The representative of an indigenous organization from Alaska asked UNPFII to make a recommendation to States for the decolonization of indigenous lands. A delegate representing several indigenous women throughout the world would like to see more inclusion of indigenous women and girls in the implementation of international norms. The representative of an indigenous organization of the Karipuna people from Brazil underlined the cultural and physical genocide that indigenous peoples in Brazil suffer today. The representative of an indigenous organization from Russia asked for the protection of indigenous peoples’ rights to culture, and raised the issue of dispossession of lands. If indigenous peoples are being dispossessed from their lands, they disappear as a people. The representative of an indigenous organization from Myanmar noted the exclusion of the decision-making process for this people and for all forms of international norms. The representative of an indigenous organization of the Tuareg people from Mali explained how the State took possession of their lands and restricted the access to water areas, crucial for their survival. The representative of an indigenous organization of the Guarani people from Ecuador raised the issue of the advances made by oil companies in this part of the Amazon rainforest, with damage to the environment and indigenous lands. The representative of an indigenous peoples’ organization from Canada pointed out four main issues: (1) the new work method of UNPFII, which should be held in the UNGA room; (2) the naming of a representative to the World Indigenous Games; (3) follow-up on the implementation of the WCIP and (4) to stop the killing of traditional healers from Peru. Another representative of an indigenous organization from Russia stressed that the organization was helping indigenous peoples to defend their lands rights but that each time, that it was becoming more difficult. The representative of an indigenous organization from Bangladesh asked for recognition of traditional indigenous lands in this country and the implementation of indigenous peoples’ rights. The representative of an indigenous organization of the Maori people from New Zealand raised the problem of the doctrine of discovery in this country and asked to put an end to it. The representative of an indigenous organization of the Saami people from Finland would like to hear more discussions on the theme of business and human rights, and how to have more participative dialogues, with the suggestion to establish regional dialogues beforehand. The representative of an indigenous organization of the Amazigh people stated that it would be wise to limit the time of States’ interventions during UNPFII; they would like to change the name of UNPFII for “Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights” and insisted on the implementation of the right to self-determination. The representative of an indigenous organization from Peru expressed worries about the increasing exploitation of the Amazon rainforest and the killing of indigenous rights.
defenders. The representative of an indigenous organization from Canada denounced violation of indigenous peoples’ rights and the lack of a reconciliation process. The representative of an indigenous organization from Haiti explained the various projects established on the island to benefit the development of the indigenous communities. The representative of an indigenous organization from Nicaragua underlined the lack of political willingness of governments to address indigenous peoples’ issues. The representative of an indigenous organization from Nepal stressed the process of intimidation by the authorities towards indigenous peoples and the massive population displacement. Another representative of an indigenous organization from Canada stated that expert members were not representing indigenous peoples worldwide while sitting as such, and suggested the creation of another status in ECOSOC in order to have UNPFII experts and other indigenous representatives elected to speak about indigenous peoples’ rights. Another representative of an indigenous organization from Peru would like to have more visibility for an indigenous Parliament and the decisions taken in it. The representative of an indigenous organization of the Mapuche people from Chile pointed out the criminalization of the Mapuche people in this country. The representative of an indigenous organization from Egypt suggested modifying the work methods of the UN to include more indigenous peoples’ voices in the negotiations. Another representative of an indigenous organization from the US warned of the on-going genocide of indigenous peoples worldwide, discussed while participating in this UNPFII session. Another representative from an organization of indigenous peoples of Russia lamented the lack of dialogue and collaboration with the State. The representative of an indigenous organization from Bolivia decried the sufferings undergone by indigenous women and the need for a greater unity to implement their rights. The representative of an indigenous organization from the Pacific warned of the lack of balance when it comes to listening to different voices; indigenous peoples never have priority. Another representative of an indigenous organization from Bangladesh asked for recognition of indigenous peoples in this country. Another representative of an indigenous organization from the US, in North Dakota, underlined the problems linked to water contamination and the survival risks the chemicals in the water represent for indigenous peoples. The representative of an indigenous peoples’ organization from Latin America insisted on more indigenous peoples’ participation in the UN process. The representative of an indigenous organization living on the border between Myanmar and India presented the assimilation process of this people lead by India and demanded peace and the recognition of indigenous peoples in India. Another representative of an indigenous organization from the US welcomed the SRRIP recommendations for the US in her 2017 report and asked for the cessation of the criminalization of indigenous peoples in the US. The representative of an indigenous organization from Guatemala asked that the participation of indigenous representatives coming from the grassroots to UNPFII be ensured as much as that of the elders. The Global Indigenous Youth Caucus raised the problems they faced in attending this UNPFII session, such as changes in the on-line accreditation system and the secondary passes to assist the plenaries. They further recommended that the UN help indigenous delegates, especially the youth, to find affordable accommodation in New York. Another representative of an indigenous organization stressed the importance safeguarding indigenous peoples’ rights standards at the international level, as well as creating bilateral conventions. The representative of an indigenous organization of the Navajo Nation from the US called for a collaborative work with all other indigenous organizations in order to safeguard the environment and slow down the damages caused by the capitalist system. Another representative of an indigenous organization from Brazil asked to make Portuguese an official language of UNPFII, in order to enable the participation of Portuguese speaking indigenous peoples.

Several experts reacted to the discussions that took place. Mr. Les Malezer underlined that the decolonization issue has been raised several times and that it would be interesting to hear some
recommendations on how to succeed with this process. **Mr. Jens Dahl** also pointed out the need to establish a monitoring mechanism to address this point. **Mr. Brian Keane** asked for an implementation of the policy related to indigenous peoples and the conservation issue. **Ms Tarcila Rivera Zea** suggested to the audience that they raise their issues as if they were directly making recommendations to the States. **Ms Lourdes Tiban Guala** underlined the importance of having a balanced report on what is going on on the ground, and the need for a united voice to make indigenous peoples’ rights a reality in-country. **Ms Aisa Mukabenova** pointed out the need for more indigenous delegates in the Steering Committee for the International Year on Indigenous Languages.

*Friday, 27 April*

- Closing of the session

**Ms. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine, Chairperson of the seventeenth session of the Permanent Forum**, made a statement in which she noted the diversity of the discussions held during this session, considering all of the realities indigenous peoples’ worldwide face nowadays. Unfortunately, it is clear that indigenous peoples are being left behind, with restricted access to basic services and consequent high mortality rates. The loss of lands is linked to loss of indigenous identity and spirituality, with increasing assimilation and criminalization processes. There is a big implementation gap for UNDRIP, but some States are already moving forward. She encouraged more States to take the lead in the implementation of best practices for indigenous peoples’ rights worldwide.

**Ms. Marlene Poitras, Regional Chief of Alberta of the Assembly of First Nations**, closed the session by stating that she wished to see more indigenous women holding leadership positions. She further underlined the need to have a human rights perspective and development for all, but also the need to recognize the progress made and solutions found. The importance of hearing about human suffering worldwide never ends, because the land for indigenous peoples is sacred and being violated. Land and spiritual connection is fundamental for indigenous identity and indigenous peoples have to bear this responsibility.

ANNEX I – LIST OF THE CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE UNPFII

Below is the list of the current Members of the Permanent Forum whose terms will expire at the end of 2019:

**Indigenous experts**

- Ms. Mariam WALLET ABOUBAKRINE (Africa)
- Mr. Elifuraha LALTAIKA (Africa)
- MS. Anne NUORGAM (Arctic)
- Ms. Terri HENRY (North America)
- Mr. Phoolman CHAUDHARY (Asia)
- Mr. Dmitri HARIKKA-ZAITSEV (Russian Federation, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Transcaucasia)
- Ms. Lourdes TIBAN GUALA (Central, South America and the Caribbean)
- Mr. Les MALEZER (Pacific)

**Experts nominated by States**

- Mr. Gervais NZOA (Cameroon)
- Ms Tarcila RIVERA ZEA (Peru)
- Ms. Aisa MUKABENOVA (Russian Federation)
- Mr. Jesus Guadalupe FUENTES BLANCO (Mexico)
ANNEX II – LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ECOSOC   Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
EMRIP    Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
EU       European Union
FAO      Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FILAC    Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean
IFAD     International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO      International Labor Organization
IUCN     International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
OHCHR    Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAHO/WHO Pan-American Health Organization/World Health Organization
SDGs     Sustainable Development Goals
SRRIP    Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNDRIP   United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNEP     United Nations Environment Program
UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC   United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA     United Nations General Assembly
UNITAR   United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNFPA    United Nations Population Fund
UNPFII   United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
WCIP     World Conference on Indigenous Peoples
WIPO     World Intellectual Property Organization

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