

ZERO DRAFT
UNICEF LAC REGION & FILAC STATEMENT AT THE REGIONAL MEETING
OF THE EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
14/07/2024

Distinguished Members of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

UNICEF and FILAC congratulates the Expert Mechanism for its comprehensive study on the rights of Indigenous children, many of whom who continue to face systemic and widespread, multiple and overlapping discriminations and marginalization.

In particular, UNICEF would like to recall that in light of the systematic discrimination they face, many Indigenous children have stood up for their rights, often taking the lead in the defense of Indigenous lands and territories, and at the forefront of movements to protect the environment and advocating for Indigenous peoples' collective rights worldwide. But in doing so, they also face high levels of risks, as children, as Indigenous children, and as human rights defenders.

UNICEF takes therefore this opportunity to suggest further reflection and emphasis in the Expert Mechanism study on the civil and political rights of Indigenous children, especially their rights to freedom of assembly and to freedom of expression, as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant instruments. Further reflection on the right of all Indigenous children to access information about their rights, and on how to seek redress in case of violations, could also be useful.

Additionally, in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, UNICEF is also particularly concerned about the gaps that continue to widen, and we highlight the following important steps that need to be taken:

1. Greater effort to guarantee access to education for students of all indigenous peoples who live in both rural and urban areas, and that this educational attention is relevant to their culture incorporating the children's mother tongue
2. Prioritize the reopening of schools and the safe return of indigenous children and adolescents to blended and face-to-face education, progressively.
3. Guarantee the participation of indigenous organizations in decision-making on the various educational and health and protection aspects that affect them, as stated in Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization and the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous People.

We call on member States to recognize, in both law and practice, the rights of Indigenous children

Thank you.