Human Rights Council 48th session

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples

UNICEF statement

Madam President,

UNICEF welcomes the Report of the Special Rapporteur.

UNICEF is concerned by the fact that Indigenous children continue to face multiple barriers to the realization of their rights, such as structural discrimination and racism, poverty, lack of access to basic services – including WASH, health and education – inadequate housing, increased interactions with State care and justice systems, violence including self-harm, forced displacement, lack of registration and recognition.

These patterns of inequalities have been magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic, with Indigenous children being disproportionately impacted, in particular children with intersecting vulnerabilities, including girls and children with disabilities, with a risk that in the recovery phase Indigenous children will be left even further behind.

In light of the systematic discrimination they face, many Indigenous children have stood up for their rights, but in doing so, they also face high levels of risks, as children, as Indigenous children, and as human rights defenders.

UNICEF therefore calls on Member States to eliminate laws, policies and practices that discriminate against children, including Indigenous children; to ensure that Indigenous children receive appropriate protection, assistance, and access to quality and culturally appropriate services, and that they are included in COVID-19 recovery plans and vaccine roll-out; and to empower Indigenous children to claim and exercise their rights and to act as agents of change.

We stand ready to support.

Thank you.