

Thirteenth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)

Statement by the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (GIYC) on Agenda Item 6:
Discussion on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP)

Thank you Madame Chair,

Concerning the High Level Plenary Meeting (HLPM) scheduled to take place this September, there seems to be no full, equal, and effective participation for Indigenous Peoples and Nations within the terms currently set.

At this time, we are in support of the idea of the HLPM —on the condition that the process at all stages includes the full, equal, and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Nations, including Indigenous youth. It is our opinion that the HLPM has the potential for our youth, Indigenous Peoples and Nations to articulate, advocate for, and advance our rights, together with U.N. member states, to create a better life for our Peoples and Nations.

Recognition of Indigenous Peoples' and Nations right to self-determination under international law is included in Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), in conjunction with Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the UN Charter. Our fundamental, inalienable and inherent right to self-determination—the original crux of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) stipulates that Indigenous Peoples have the right to freely choose their political status equally as the category of Peoples and/or Nations.

Member states must thoroughly respect and uphold the fundamental obligations of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), specifically Articles 3, 18, 19, 32(2), and 38, in securing the right of Indigenous Peoples to full, equal, and effective participation in this High Level Plenary Meeting.

We would also like to highlight and encourage the UN Member states, The President of the General Assembly and the UN system to respect and abide by the UNDRIP, especially Article 18 which states clearly that Indigenous Peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures. For the HLPM to be successful, it is crucial that the preparatory process fulfill the full, equal and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Nations.

As a result of the ongoing discussion and debate concerning this proposed HLPM, there is now a constant situation of change and uncertainty. If the PGA, and state members of the United Nations, are unwilling to engage in ongoing discussion to ensure Indigenous Peoples' full, equal, and effective participation in the organizing, planning and convening of a World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, then the GIYC will evaluate the process again and will inform our position later.

In the event that the modalities for the High Level Plenary is consistent with the international rights of Indigenous Peoples and Nations to self-determination, provides for the full, equal and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Nations in all aspects of the HLPM, including the drafting, acceptance and dissemination of the outcome document, then the Youth Caucus members to the Global Coordinating Group (GCG) are authorized to fulfill their mandate as described in the GCG Terms of Reference.

Madame Chair,

The GIYC has the following recommendations:

We would like to encourage member states, Indigenous Peoples and Nations to ensure Indigenous youth participation in a possible HLPM.

We ask the Permanent Forum to urge the President of the General Assembly (PGA) to extend the duration of the HLPM from two days (with a total of 90 minutes of deliberations) to a longer duration in order to ensure full, equal and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Nations.

We urge the Permanent Forum to encourage member states, UN Agencies/Bodies, the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary General to ensure and guarantee the necessary funds for the full, equal, and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, including the Indigenous Youth during the possible HLPM.

If these conditions are met, we, Indigenous Youth of the GIYC, will do our best to make this HLPM be a great success.

Thank you, Madame Chair.