

STATEMENT – UNFPA

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Eighteenth Session – New York, 2019

Agenda Item 4 – Implementation of six mandated areas

Madam Chair, Distinguished delegates and representatives,

The United Nations Population Fund would like to thank the Members of the Forum for this opportunity to address the Forum.

This eighteenth session of the Forum comes at a special year for us; the International Conference on Population and Development commemorates its twenty-fifth anniversary this year, which will be celebrated at a Global Summit in November in Nairobi, while UNFPA itself will turn fifty this year.

While we reflect on the progress achieved in meeting the promise of the 1994 International Conference of Population and Development, we know that a major gap has been that in many countries indigenous peoples have been “left behind” in their ability to exercise their right to sexual and reproductive health and to be protected from violence.

For example from the Fact Sheet that UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women launched at this Forum last year, we know that across the globe, when it comes to maternal health and maternal mortality, indigenous women and adolescents face persistent inequalities and stigma. Yet the lack of data in this area renders them invisible and presents a major barrier to efforts to address the issue.

At UNFPA are trying to strengthen our work to support indigenous women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights. As parts of these efforts, we have launched an initiative to document through our Maternal Health Trust Fund the situation of

access to health care for indigenous women and girls in some of the countries that we work in order to provide better support to these groups of women.

At this year's summit in Nairobi we will have a major opportunity to raise attention and strengthen commitment among Member States and partners on the need to collect data documenting the situations of marginalization and inequalities facing indigenous populations in access to health, as well as the need for more targeted health interventions that tackle the physical, financial, social and cultural barriers that indigenous populations face. As part of these efforts, it will be important to ensure that the voice of indigenous women and girls are strongly heard at the Summit so that together we can advocate and push for accelerated action for indigenous people's right to sexual and reproductive health.