

Oral Statement during the Annual half-day panel discussion on the rights of indigenous peoples at the 51st session of the Human Rights Council

28 September 2022

Thank you, Mr. President,

We welcome this Panel's focus and thank the panelists for their valuable contributions. The rights of Indigenous Peoples continue to be disproportionately affected by current global crises, including the COVID-19 Pandemic and the climate crisis.

We are concerned by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Indigenous Peoples, especially by their lack of access to quality health care, education, and water and sanitation systems. The States' measures to address the pandemic, such as restrictions on movement, have greatly affected their livelihoods, food security and their over-all well-being.

As the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples noted, a number of States' pandemic recovery laws have been primarily geared towards managing the economic crisis and have prioritized the expansion of business operations at the expense of Indigenous Peoples, their lands and the environment.

We call on States to address the intersecting crises with a human rights-based approach guided by the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment to achieve a just transition, including the resilience of indigenous food systems, focusing on land-based solutions that recognize the collective territorial rights of Indigenous Peoples while giving higher priority to community-managed and women-led solutions.

We urge States to engage in a meaningful, participatory and inclusive dialogue with Indigenous Peoples on the long-term consequences of the pandemic on cultural heritage and livelihoods and to ensure that COVID-19 recovery measures address the long-term needs and financial impact of the pandemic on Indigenous Peoples, including on education, health employment, housing, and other social and public services. The CEDAW's soon to be published General Recommendation on Indigenous Women and Girls should be used as a guiding tool to ensure that the human rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially indigenous women and girls, are at the forefront of decision and policy making.

Thank you.

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