



**Written Statement of the Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples on occasion of the
International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples**

**Issued at the commemorative event organized by the United Nations Department of
Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)**

New York, 9 August 2022

The Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples joins indigenous peoples' organizations and partners from the United Nations System, the academia and non-governmental organizations in the commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

Today is an occasion to honor indigenous peoples across the world, who account for over 476 million people.

We welcome that this year's commemoration focuses on the roles of indigenous women in the preservation and transmission of traditional knowledge.

Indigenous women —girls, youth, and elders in all their diversity— are a fundamental pillar of their communities.

Indigenous women are holders and transmitters of knowledge related to sustainable land management and biodiversity protection, health and medicine, food, language revitalization, cultural expressions and heritage, indigenous history, philosophies and spiritual traditions, among many other important fields.

Their knowledge is critical to creating solutions to current challenges and to strengthening the resilience of their communities and our societies as a whole. Indigenous women are playing a key role in the COVID-19 response and recovery of their communities.

Indigenous women's full, equal and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making processes and in all aspects of community and public life must be ensured. Their social, political, and economic inclusion must be part of the wider efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Gender equality and the empowerment of indigenous women are key to protect indigenous knowledge from misappropriation. We further reaffirm that indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, and that they also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property

over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, and further recall that States, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, shall take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and as acknowledged in national law;

We also acknowledge the importance and the work of Indigenous women's organizations in advancing the rights of indigenous peoples and the human rights of women and girls in all their diversity.

Poverty, marginalization and sexual and gender-based violence continue to be too common manifestations of the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by indigenous women and girls. We must continue to work together and redouble efforts to eradicate all forms of violence, discrimination and exclusion, and ensure the respect, protection and fulfillment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We note with appreciation the ongoing efforts and work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to draft a general recommendation on the rights of indigenous women and girls.

We underscore the importance of indigenous languages for the transmission of indigenous knowledge. The International Decade of Indigenous Languages must include gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment as part of the efforts to promote and revitalize indigenous languages.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is an opportunity to recognize the important contributions of indigenous peoples to our societies and create awareness of the challenges faced by all indigenous peoples. It is an occasion to recognize the contributions of indigenous peoples to the work of the United Nations and the need to continue to examine measures to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is an opportunity to renew our commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and our commitment to achieving sustainable development that leaves no one behind.

The Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples is a multi-regional group of 22 States, which include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, the Kingdom of Denmark, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Norway, New Zealand, Spain, Paraguay, Peru and the United States of America.