

Four Recommendations for Action to Make the World Conference Successful

Today, no country in the world opposes the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Yet, regrettably, seven years after its adoption by the UN General Assembly, the Declaration is having little effect on curbing violations of indigenous peoples' rights. According to General Assembly Resolution 66/296, the World Conference is to "result in a concise, action-oriented outcome document" which "should contribute to the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, pursue the objectives of the [Declaration] and promote the achievement of all internationally agreed development goals."

Towards those objectives, at least 129 indigenous nations and 21 organizations propose the following recommendations for inclusion in the outcome document:

1. **An implementing body for the UN Declaration:**

Decide to create an implementing and monitoring body with a mandate to promote and monitor implementation of the Declaration and to encourage compliance with the obligations expressed in the Declaration. Such a monitoring and implementation body should have a mandate to receive relevant information, to share best practices, to make recommendations, and otherwise to work toward the objectives of the Declaration. The body should be made up of expert members, including indigenous experts. The General Assembly should establish a process, which would include including indigenous peoples' representatives, for elaborating the structure and mandate of such a body or mechanism at the earliest possible time.

2. **Combating violence against indigenous women and children** with three actions:

- a. *Decide to convene a high-level conference to examine challenges to the safety and well-being of indigenous women and children and to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous women and children under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples with respect to protection against all forms of violence and discrimination;*
- b. *Decide to require that a UN body for monitoring and implementing the Declaration give particular attention, on at least an annual basis, "to the rights and special needs of indigenous . . . women, youth, and children . . . in the implementation of the UN Declaration;" and*
- c. *Decide to appoint a Special Rapporteur to focus exclusively on human rights issues of indigenous women and children, including but not limited to violence against them and on changing state laws that discriminate against them.*

3. **An appropriate status for indigenous peoples within the UN:**

Create a distinct and appropriate status for Indigenous Peoples within the United Nations system in order to regularize and facilitate the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the work of the United Nations. Such a status within the UN system must give appropriate recognition to Indigenous Peoples represented by their own governments. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues [or the Expert Mechanism on Rights of Indigenous Peoples], in consultation with States and Indigenous Peoples, should be given responsibility for elaborating a resolution on this matter for adoption by the General Assembly at the earliest possible time.

4. **Action to protect rights to religious and cultural sites:**

Take priority action to protect indigenous peoples' rights to their religious and cultural sites, and recommends particularly that the World Conference request the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Human Rights Council, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to gather and share relevant information and best practices, conduct expert meetings and interactive panels, prepare studies, issue reports, and make concrete recommendations for the implementation of indigenous peoples' right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites and to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies. The recommended implementing and monitoring mechanism for the UN Declaration, when it is created, should also give priority attention to the protection of indigenous peoples' religious and cultural sites.

Similar recommendations have been made by other indigenous peoples and regions worldwide, including but not limited to the Alta Outcome Document.

We call on states to adopt these recommendations for inclusion in the outcome document by the World Conference. We also urge other indigenous peoples to join us in supporting the recommendations.