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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

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Draft report

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

Recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Discussion on the theme “Enhancing Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination in the context of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: emphasizing the voices of Indigenous youth” (item 3)

1. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues expresses its profound appreciation to the Vice-President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, David Choquehuanca Céspedes, and to the Minister for Indigenous Peoples of Brazil, Sônia Guajajara, for their presence and welcomes their interventions at the session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
2. The right to self-determination and autonomy is central to strengthening Indigenous Peoples politically, socially, culturally and economically, and to enabling Indigenous Peoples to design their own future consistent with their views and cultural norms. The advancement by States of the right to self-determination is essential to enable Indigenous Peoples to protect and fully realize all other rights set forth in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to make decisions regarding their people, lands, territories and resources.
3. The Permanent Forum welcomes the study transmitted in the note by the Secretariat entitled “Guiding principles for the implementation of Indigenous Peoples’ rights to autonomy and self-government” (E/C.19/2024/3), which includes global examples of situations in which the rights to autonomy and self-determination



come into play and the pivotal role of unified visions and objectives in the quest of Indigenous Peoples towards fully realizing autonomy and self-government.

4. The Permanent Forum welcomes the statement by former Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, James Anaya, that the ongoing exercise of self-determination by Indigenous Peoples entails self-governance or autonomy, along with participation in all relevant decision-making processes, the enjoyment and development of their traditional knowledge and diverse cultures, including languages and religious traditions, and stewardship over lands and resources, among other aspects.

5. The Permanent Forum recalls that the right to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples is grounded in the Declaration, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Permanent Forum calls upon all Member States to redouble efforts to fully realize the right of self-determination for Indigenous Peoples by ensuring that Indigenous Peoples remain at the centre of all decision-making processes that affect their Peoples, their communities, their lands and their resources.

6. The Permanent Forum reiterates its recommendation that Member States review and revise their constitutions and legal frameworks to comprehensively recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to self-determination. Such review and revision processes should be driven and guided by Indigenous Peoples. The Forum also recommends that Member States develop and adopt specific national plans to ensure that all policies and laws conform with the recognition and advancement of the right to self-determination, including self-governance and autonomy. The Forum further recommends that States engage in processes focused on decolonization and reconciliation policies that facilitate the path of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination. The Forum urges Member States to consider Indigenous Peoples as equal partners who can contribute to the development of the countries in which they live.

7. The Permanent Forum emphasizes the essential role of Indigenous Peoples' languages and cultural practices in self-determination and urges Member States to adopt stronger measures to protect them from erosion and negligence. The Forum decries the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage sites and the loss of Indigenous Peoples' languages, urging immediate protective measures through robust legal and policy frameworks aligned with the Declaration.

8. The Permanent Forum highlights the pivotal role of Indigenous women and elders in transmitting cultural values and traditions, recognizing their critical influence on the sustainability of Indigenous cultures. The Forum calls upon Member States to support the establishment of mechanisms for the empowerment of Indigenous women and girls, and calls for their equal involvement and participation in decision-making processes at all levels.

9. The Permanent Forum is concerned by the adverse effects of climate change and irresponsible resource extraction on Indigenous Peoples' lands and territories. The Forum calls upon Member States, the United Nations and other international organizations to support Indigenous-led initiatives to mitigate these impacts and stresses the importance of self-governance of Indigenous Peoples in managing these natural resources.

Indigenous young people

10. Indigenous young people are proactively championing Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination, intertwining traditional knowledge and ecological stewardship with modern governance to ensure that Indigenous Peoples' world views

are integral in shaping policies at all levels. It is vital to enhance legal frameworks, policymaking processes and international collaboration to ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous young people in self-determination efforts.

11. Indigenous young people face significant barriers, including discrimination and marginalization, which critically impede their ability to practise and sustain their culture, traditions, languages and identities. The Forum draws attention to the high rates of suicide among Indigenous young people in some countries, and reiterates its call for States to increase support for culturally appropriate prevention programmes and leadership development.

12. The Permanent Forum recommends that Member States and the United Nations system develop and support educational and leadership programmes tailored to the needs of Indigenous young people, enabling them to fulfil their potential as leaders and protectors of their cultures and territories.

13. The Permanent Forum urges Member States to make significant investments in bilingual and culturally appropriate primary, secondary and higher education programmes, including mobile education initiatives for nomadic and semi-nomadic communities. Furthermore, the Forum calls upon Member States to establish effective mechanisms to ensure Indigenous young people occupy central roles in policy and political arenas and to break down barriers to their full political participation and leadership.

14. The Permanent Forum notes the significant impact of conservation policies on the lands and territories of Indigenous Peoples. Conservation efforts worldwide, while often laudable, must recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' collective rights to their lands, territories and resources. The Forum also notes that Indigenous Peoples have long been sustainable and responsible stewards of their lands, territories and resources; and effective and sustainable management must include and benefit from the leadership and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and incorporate the principles of free, prior and informed consent.

15. The Permanent Forum regrets the outcome and impact of the "Indigenous Voice" referendum on Indigenous Peoples, held in Australia in 2023, which undermines their journey towards the full realization of the right to self-determination for Indigenous Peoples, and underscores the significance of international awareness, solidarity and support.

16. The Permanent Forum notes with concern the retreat by the Government of New Zealand from the principles of the Declaration and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as enshrined in the Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi).

17. The Permanent Forum recognizes the unique challenges faced by the Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine – the Crimean Tatars, Karaites and Krymchaks – as a result of the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the occupation of the Crimean Peninsula, which greatly affects their right to self-determination.

18. The Permanent Forum welcomes the initiative of the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to adopt a law on free, prior and informed consent. The Forum urges that this law be adopted in line with the highest standards with regard to the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the Declaration, ensuring the full participation of Indigenous Peoples throughout the process and promoting the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' own protocols.

19. The rights of Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and in initial contact continue to face grave threats of dispossession and destruction of their ancestral territories, as well as the risk of genocide, owing to the lack of recognition of their rights. These threats include encroachment by extractive industries and the rapid

imposition of monocultures, deforestation, violence, and the presence and proselytism of missionaries, including Mennonite groups. The Permanent Forum urges the application and observance of guidelines and recommendations by regional and international entities, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, for the protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and in initial contact.

20. The Permanent Forum recommends that Member States and the United Nations make additional and more steadfast efforts to collect data and perform research regarding Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and in initial contact and the effects of such data and research. The Forum reiterates its recommendation that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in cooperation with regional bodies and Indigenous Peoples, advance the protection of Indigenous Peoples living in voluntary isolation and in initial contact.

21. The Permanent Forum recognizes that, where Indigenous children have been placed in boarding and residential schools without first obtaining the free, prior and informed consent of the affected Indigenous Peoples, there have been dramatically grave negative impacts on the well-being and identity development of Indigenous students, on their families, and on the communities and cultures of Indigenous Peoples in numerous places around the world, including Australia, Canada and the United States of America, as well as in French Guiana. The Forum recommends that that States find mechanisms to redress the harms caused by boarding and residential schools, and engage in effective reconciliation efforts. With respect to French Guiana specifically, the Forum calls upon the Government of France establish a truth commission to investigate the conditions of boarding and residential schools in France and its overseas territories. The Government of France should adopt measures for healing, reparation and rehabilitation. The commission should guarantee gender equality in terms of inclusion and ensure the full participation of the Indigenous Peoples affected.

22. The Permanent Forum recommends that all States take full and effective measures to embed policies and practices, including consultation, to ensure that the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination is honoured and advanced in all instances where law, policies, programmes and funding may affect Indigenous Peoples.
