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**“Combating Polarization in Times of Global Crisis”**

## **Economic and Social Council**

*Assessing governmental support and  
beneficiary systems for indigenous  
people*

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RESEARCH  
REPORT



**Forum:** Economic and Social Council

**Issue:** Assessing governmental support and beneficiary systems for indigenous people

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## **Introduction**

Indigenous people are unique cultural and social groups with joint ancestral links to the grounds and natural resources on which they reside, inhabit, or have been dislodged. Their identities, traditions, occupations, and body and soul well-being are intricately tied to the grounds and resources on which they rely and live on. They typically follow their traditional leaders and groups for representation that is different or dissimilar from the established culture or society. Many Indigenous people speak a different language from the officially recognized language of the area in which they live.

In over 90 nations, there are approximately 370 to 500 million Indigenous people. Despite constituting only 5% of the world population, they represent around 15% of the severely poor and disadvantaged. Indigenous people have a life span that is up to 20 years lower than non-indigenous peoples across the world due to the limited resources, rights, and opportunities. Having owned, occupied, or used a fourth of the globe's land area, Indigenous people protect 80% of the total of the world's surviving biodiversity. They have significant ancestral skills and expertise in how to adjust, alleviate, and lessen catastrophe risks including the ongoing climate crisis.

Indigenous people have very little legal recognition over their territories, grounds, and natural resources; throughout history, they have usually been the last to receive government investments in fundamental services and infrastructure, including educational or health facilities; and they have been facing numerous barriers to fully take parts in economics and politics, accessing equity, and participating in legal actions and decision making. Due to this heritage of injustice and isolation, indigenous people are more exposed to the effects of catastrophic events such as climate change, natural disasters, and disease epidemics like COVID'19. Indigenous people are even more vulnerable to these catastrophes because of a lack of access to health, water, and sanitation services, market closures, and movement limitations. All of

these factors have had a significant impact on their source of income, resource unreliability, and well-being.



Figure 1: World Map of Native Land Territories Throughout History

Many lands held by Indigenous people are under traditional ownership, meaning it is not solely their land, only a small portion of this land is officially recognized as belonging to Indigenous people by many countries. Yet when indigenous lands and territories are acknowledged, boundary protection and outside parties' usage of natural resources are frequently lax. So, unprotected land is a major contributor to this conflict and issue. It also causes environmental disruption and low socioeconomic growth. This endangers societal survival as well as essential knowledge structures and traditions, which together contribute greatly to the ecological nobility, biodiversity, and environmental safety on which we all rely.

Enhancing land tenure rights, reinforcing democratic accountability, advancing investments for the public as in reliability, comfort, safety, and supplying culturally sensitive services, while supporting indigenous ways of life are key to reducing poverty. This would also make a contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs of UN). Indigenous people's rights have been progressively acknowledged during the last two decades as a result of the implementation of international processes.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Indigenous:** coming from a particular place and having lived there for a long time before other people came there; relating to, belonging to or developed by these people; native; first people; first nations; aboriginal groups

**customary ownership:** land owned by indigenous communities and administered in accordance with their customs, as opposed to statutory tenure usually introduced during the colonial periods

**tenure:** the period of time when somebody holds an important job, especially a political one; the act of holding an important job

**lax:** not strict, severe or careful enough about work, rules or standards of behavior

## General Overview

Within the history of the United Nations, the issue of indigenous people first came up in 1923, when Cayuga Chief Deskaheh of the Iroquois had traveled to Geneva, yet was not accepted at the then-League of Nations. After that, a major landmark was adopted, which was the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples broadens the overall legal human rights framework in the wider picture of the growth of international humanitarian laws. With the turnaround of the nations that had previously voted against ratification, the UN Declaration now symbolizes worldwide consensus on indigenous peoples' rights.

Because of the diversity of indigenous people, the UN has not declared an official definition for the indigenous population. However, the understanding of the term is based on several factors that have their differences from the relative mainstream society. First is a sense of identity which implies that the individual suggests and is suggested by a certain community. Second, there has to be a link to a certain place and the resources and people of that location, along with a link to a specific culture, values, spiritual traditions, as well as, spoken languages, ideologies, and systems of government. The preservation of different social identities, ethnic settings, and cultural traditions and heritage is also a very important factor.

While Indigenous people are unique, with their own set of demands, goals, and conflicts, they also frequently share a common set of issues and stories. Concerns about the following may be among a variety of different issues:

### **Inadequate Political Representation**

In principle, the concept of democracy is meant to apply from within homogeneous groups (according to the ideal form of nation-state, which is the application of democratic principles over a large-scale sociopolitical area), when the reality is far more complex. Many nations across the world are made up of numerous groups that are distinct from each other. This is true for nations having indigenous people within their boundaries. When indigenous peoples have a different political vocabulary than the rest of the population, and racial belonging becomes a fundamental component of that political exchange, a scenario of "identity politics" comes up. This means that politics is organized around concerns of identity, which can produce multidimensional cleavages and structural political struggles at many levels.

### **Economic Marginality**

Prolonged history of colonialism and oppression has led to indigenous peoples' marginalization from mainstream civilizations. Indigenous peoples experience structural exclusion from political and economic authority; they remain to be well over-represented among the impoverished, and uneducated; they are displaced by military conflicts and natural catastrophes; indigenous peoples are evicted of their native homelands and stripped of their physical and cultural survival resources. Indigenous peoples are frequently neglected and discriminated against in judicial systems across the world, making them even more susceptible to abuse and violence.

### **Prejudice and Racism**

Racist and prejudiced ideas create a social order in which Indigenous peoples are deprived of resources while mainstream groups maintain authority and control. Individual and structural racism against individuals, communities, and countries is justified by 'othering' Indigenous peoples via politically manufactured disparities.

### **Deficient Societal and Governmental Services**

Indigenous peoples frequently struggle to gain access to the necessary and primary services, such as healthcare services. Accessing primary health care services necessitates more than simply services that

are easily accessible. It can be difficult to ensure the availability of health care for Indigenous peoples, who are frequently confronted with many extra hurdles.

### **Education**

Indigenous Peoples frequently do not have an opportunity to be schooled in their native languages, and the syllabus and teaching techniques do not adequately include or respect their societies' backgrounds, customs, learning practices, and traditional knowledge. While Indigenous Peoples' socioeconomic outcomes are frequently lower than that of other communities, data usually show poverty, marginalization, and their educational objectives and viewpoints. This is due in part to the fact that their identities and ways of life include both personal and communal rights, as well as traditional, societal, and financial dimensions.

### **Land Evictions**

The overall treatment of colonized indigenous communities has resulted from a variety of correlated components and attitudes spanning governance, social-economic values, and finances. While far from ideal, the overall treatment of indigenous peoples in many nations has improved over the last several decades. Governments are acknowledging indigenous peoples and enacting new legislation to safeguard their survival, assets, and cultural heritage. Treaty obligations and United Nations regulations aimed at protecting indigenous cultures provide evidence of development.

## **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

### **Canada**

The Canadian Constitution acknowledges three categories of Aboriginal peoples: Indians (also known as First Nations), Inuit, and Métis. These are three different peoples, each having their own history, language, cultural customs, and spiritual beliefs. In Canada, around 1.67 million individuals identify as Aboriginal.

### **Chile**

Chile's indigenous peoples, sometimes known as Native Chileans, account for around 10% of the country's overall population. According to the 2012 census, 2,000,000 persons claim indigenous ancestry. The majority of Chileans are of indigenous heritage, and the word and its legal implications are normally reserved for people who self-identify with and are recognized by one or more indigenous organizations.

## Colombia

The American Indians, also known as the Indigenous peoples of Colombia, are the ethnicities who lived in Colombia long before the arrival of Europeans in the early 16th century. They are known as "pueblos indgenas" in Spanish and makeup 4.4 percent of the nation's people, belonging to 87 distinct tribes.

## Ecuador

Indigenous peoples of Ecuador, also known as Native Ecuadorians, are tribes of people that lived in what is now Ecuador, before the Spanish colonization of America. Their heritage, which spans the previous 11,000 years, continues to the current day; 25 percent of Ecuador's population is indigenous, while the remaining 55-65 percent are Mestizos of mixed indigenous and European ancestry.

## India

Adivasi is the collective word for India's Tribes, who are regarded to be India's native ones, previous to the arrival of the Dravidians and Indo-Aryans. It relates to any of several ethnic groups thought to be the original occupants of the Indian subcontinent."

## Timeline of Main Events

<b>1989</b>	<i>Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention</i>
<b>1997</b>	<i>OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme</i>
<b>2007</b>	<i>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)</i>

2014	<i>World Conference on Indigenous Peoples</i>
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## Treaties and Events

### *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention ([C169](#))*

The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of 1989 is an International Labour Organization Convention, also known as ILO Convention 169 or C169. It is the most important and legally binding multilateral treaty relating to indigenous peoples and tribal peoples, and it served as a precursor to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### *OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme*

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) began the initiative in 1997 as part of the inaugural International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. The program's goal is to provide indigenous peoples with the chance to learn about the UN system and the procedures that deal with human rights concerns in general, and indigenous issues specifically.

### *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ([UNDRIP](#))*

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is an international treaty signed by the United Nations on September 13, 2007, to embody the rights that according to Article 43 "constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of the world's indigenous peoples."

### *World Conference on Indigenous Peoples*

On September 22-23, 2014, the first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples took place. The gathering provided a chance to discuss ideas and the best practices for achieving indigenous peoples' rights, particularly pursuing the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Seeing past actions taken in order to resolve this issue, we may conclude that, because of the fact that the discrimination and armed conflict is highly up to date, raising awareness remains important to making a difference. In this regard, unlike most of the past actions, future attempts should be focusing on priorities, including indigenous people into the discussions especially in the matters that affect them directly, building awareness publicly, and connecting policies with the practices.

## Possible Solutions

Possible solutions proposed in order to assess governmental support and beneficiary systems for indigenous people should include the recognition of indigenous peoples as holders of rights and the emphasis on the necessity of no cost, foregoing, and informed consent in initiatives. Indigenous peoples should be acknowledged as significant decision-makers and specialists on issues affecting them. Indigenous peoples' fair and equitable treatment, and involvement at all phases of a program should be emphasized. A strong collaboration must be created between or through nongovernmental organizations and local institutions, Member States, and indigenous peoples. A culturally aware perspective to the program should also be included knowledge of indigenous cultural norms and practices, which is included in legislation and policy design and execution.

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