

## STATEMENT

**By:** UNAIDS

**Date:** 25 April 2019

**Place:** New York, U.S.A.

**Occasion:** 18<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

**Agenda item 3:** Follow-up to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Chair,

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) would like to take this opportunity to express our support to the Forum as an important venue for the promotion of dialogue between governments, indigenous peoples and the UN system.

While incomplete, available data show that the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples across the globe is substantially poorer than that of the general population.<sup>1, 2</sup> Despite their strength and resilience, Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately impacted by a range of health issues, including poor sexual and reproductive health (SRH), HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis outcomes. Access to services, and knowledge and uptake of services, remains poor.

At its sixteenth session, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommended that "...UNAIDS, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, sponsor an expert group meeting on HIV/AIDS by 2019, which would include the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, to analyse the sociocultural and economic determinants of health for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment in indigenous communities, with the Forum's collaboration, in order to ensure the realization of target 3.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals." Last year, the Forum expressed appreciation for the steps taken by UNAIDS, UNFPA and IASG and called on Member States and UN entities to contribute to the workshop.

Over the past year, UNAIDS and UNFPA, in consultation with leaders from the International Indigenous HIV/AIDS Community and the Inter-agency Support Group, have developed an approach to fast-track the rights of Indigenous peoples to access integrated SRH / HIV services as part of national AIDS and development programmes.

This approach favours a process in countries to support development of national and local programmes to better address the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of Indigenous Peoples. With the support of stakeholders, we hope to begin this year a series of national dialogues focusing on Indigenous Peoples' SRHR / HIV. The aim is to work with Indigenous Peoples to identify people-centred approaches for holistically addressing priority SRH and HIV issues within local indigenous communities. Once defined, these approaches will

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs326/en/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/68/pdf/wcip/IASG%20Thematic%20Paper%20-%20Health%20-%20rev1.pdf>

be promoted for inclusion within National AIDS Programmes and broader, national health and strategic plans, for rollout within Indigenous communities.

This approach calls for full Indigenous community consultation, partnership, engagement and ownership of Indigenous health programme enhancements. Broader partnerships are also needed between UN agencies and the Interagency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, member states – including National AIDS Programmes, Ministries of Health, Indigenous Affairs and other relevant entities, civil society organisations representing Indigenous Peoples, including those living with HIV, women and youth and advocating for their SRHR, and other development partners.

Chair,

We call on interested Member States and UN entities to join us in preparing for these national dialogues to help fast-track the rights of Indigenous peoples to access integrated sexual and reproductive health / HIV services as part of national AIDS and development programmes.

Thank you.