



## **Side Event: "Towards an inclusive and sustainable recovery from COVID-19: Rights, needs and contributions of indigenous peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean"**

### **Objective of the side event**

**The purpose of this side event is to advocate for the rights and needs of indigenous peoples in the context of COVID-19, and to highlight concrete experiences in the region that have facilitated the inclusion and participation of indigenous peoples in both the immediate response to the pandemic and in the definition of long-term socio-economic recovery policies.**

### **Context**

The Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region is the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the worst economic recession in 120 years and more than a third of the population in LAC living in poverty in 2021. With a population of 60 million in LAC, indigenous people are among the most at-risk population in terms of COVID-19 impact. Pre-existing barriers in access to culturally sensitive health and social services, lack of access to justice, violence and trafficking of women and girls, xenophobia and discrimination, as well as lack of access to land and natural resources are fuelling a disproportionate impact of the pandemic on indigenous people. An estimated 43% of indigenous households in the region live below the poverty line and the loss of livelihoods due to COVID-19 indicates a rise in food insecurity.

In this context, indigenous organizations have expressed their growing concerns about the humanitarian needs of indigenous people and their risks to attain sustainable human development. Inclusive, community-based risk and needs assessments should be carried out to understand the specific situation of indigenous peoples, including through disaggregated data to ensure adequate visibility in local and national statistics. Concerted efforts are required to ensure that indigenous peoples are sufficiently consulted and empowered as agents of change in their communities, particularly women and young people, to identify sustainable solutions for their development. Towards this end, it is urgent to reactivate social dialogue and spaces, including grievance mechanisms to advocate and give visibility to the needs of indigenous peoples and engage them in public-decision making regarding the COVID-19 response and longer-term recovery. Recovery policies need to ensure culturally sensitive interventions, including access to information on indigenous languages. Further, as the pandemic is increasing the environmental threats on indigenous population, measures are needed to protect land and access to natural resources which are essential for their livelihoods and traditional activities.

### **The United Nations immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19**

Launched in April 2020, the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 guides the action for the United Nations Development Systems through 2021. To inform the design of the immediate response plans, UN Country Teams undertook a rapid-assessment of the socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 in all countries and territories in the LAC region. The analysis showed that indigenous peoples were among the populations most affected by the pandemic, indicating a strong need to strengthen the resilience of indigenous communities, empower indigenous organizations and increase access to health and social services. The assessments also noted the importance of fostering social dialogue, improving access to information, promoting evidence-based



and culturally sensitive programming, and protecting the environment and livelihoods of indigenous peoples. The socioeconomic response plans of countries in the LAC region include more than 108 activities targeting indigenous communities.

It is evident that insufficient data exists to conduct analysis on the impact of COVID-19 on indigenous peoples. Strengthening information management systems and promoting inclusive consultation processes is crucial to inform public policies and programmes to ensure that the needs of indigenous populations are considered with a strong human rights-based approach. The UN Country Teams are partnering with civil society organizations, including indigenous groups in many countries in the LAC region to ensure their engagement in the response to COVID-19 and the development of longer-term socio-economic recovery policies.

### **Participants and panelists**

This virtual event will bring together relevant stakeholders, including United Nations Resident Coordinators, government representatives and representatives of indigenous organizations. It will be facilitated by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), jointly with the United Nations Development Coordination Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDCO LAC).

Special guests will provide an overview of the needs and rights of indigenous peoples in the current context, share concrete examples of indigenous peoples' participation in the definition of public policies in the context of COVID-19, and offer their perspectives for an effective response to ensure the participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples in long-term socio-economic recovery policies.

\*\*\*\*\*