The Peacebuilding Commission will hold on 19 June a meeting on Indigenous Peoples, Peace and Reconciliation in Canada, Colombia and Norway to discuss how reconciliation processes with Indigenous Peoples can contribute to more sustainable, equitable and prosperous societies. The meeting will seek to share unique experiences from Canada, Colombia, and Norway with members of the Peacebuilding Commission.

There are over 476 million Indigenous People living in 90 countries across the world, accounting for 6.2 per cent of the global population. Indigenous Peoples have historically experienced centuries of structural discrimination, resulting in marginalization and exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from decision-making. Maintaining and strengthening their unique political, legal, economic, social, and cultural institutions is crucial, as is ensuring the right of Indigenous Peoples to fully engage, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the State. Most disputes involving Indigenous Peoples are related to economic interests over Indigenous Peoples’ lands, territories, and resources, and the denial of their right to self-determination, the right to decide their kind of development as well as their right to be consulted to obtain their free, prior and informed consent as guaranteed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In this regard, it is critical to acknowledge the role that access to justice plays in advancing and defending the rights of Indigenous Peoples and individuals, as well as the necessity of examining and removing barriers to justice for Indigenous Peoples in general and Indigenous women, children, youth, older people, and persons with disabilities in particular. The ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 is a major binding normative framework recognizing Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination within a nation-state, while setting standards for national governments regarding Indigenous Peoples’ economic, socio-cultural and political rights, including the right to land. Often, these disputes lead to the militarization of Indigenous territories resulting in a high prevalence of poverty among Indigenous Peoples and their displacement to urban areas and even outside national borders, leaving them further vulnerable to discrimination and marginalization, with women and children disproportionately affected.

Several countries have undertaken actions to address longstanding discrimination and promote social inclusion and participation. Further, the recognition of Indigenous Peoples, as peoples with corresponding individual and collective rights has been included in the establishment reconciliation processes with Member States. These processes have significantly contributed to preventing social unrest, tensions, and reducing conflicts. For Indigenous Peoples, truth commissions have played an important role in redressing abuses and upholding their rights. They have offered an opportunity to showcase Indigenous Peoples’ individual and collective visions and narratives. Improving their social, political, and economic inclusion is critical for broader efforts of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Based on a recommendation by the UN Permanent Forum
on Indigenous Issues\textsuperscript{1}, in 2019, through Resolution A/74/396, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2022-2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages to draw attention to the critical loss of Indigenous languages and the need to preserve, revitalize and promote them through urgent action at the national and international levels.

In November 2022, upon request of the Permanent Forum, and as approved by ECOSOC, DESA organized an expert group meeting on the theme “Truth, transitional justice and reconciliation processes” in Santiago, Chile. The exchange of views and identified recommendations fed into the Permanent Forum held in New York from 17 to 28 April 2023 in document E/C.19/2023/3. In particular, the Permanent Forum issued a recommendation that the Human Rights Council request OHCHR, in cooperation with relevant UN entities, to prepare a companion report by 2025 related to the Guidance note of the Secretary-General: UN approach to transitional justice.

**Experiences from Canada, Colombia and Norway**

Colonialism has been an intrinsic part of the Canadian nation-building project from the very start. Between 1867 and 1996, Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and assimilated at residential schools, with many experiencing all forms of abuse. Survivors advocated for recognition and reparations and demanded accountability for the intergenerational impacts of harms caused. Their efforts culminated in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (2006) and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2007-2015), among other initiatives. Based on consultations with survivors on their experiences related to the Agreement, a report was published in 2020 on lessons learned to inform future work on settlements, truth-telling, reconciliation, and healing. In 2016, Canada established the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2016–2019). In 2021, based on joint work by the federal, provincial and territorial authorities/governments with Indigenous governments, organizations and communities, Canada launched the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ People National Action Plan as a major step in ending violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people. Canada has remained committed to work together with First Nations, Inuit and Metis to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to strengthen reconciliation efforts and help Canada turn the page on colonial structures, close socio-economic gaps, and promote greater prosperity for Indigenous Peoples and all Canadians. In March, the Government invited the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to visit Canada. A report of his visit will be discussed at the next session of the UN Human Rights Council in September 2023.

The decades-long armed conflict in Colombia severely affected Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous women disproportionately, with higher levels of sexual violence and internal displacement. Challenging their ongoing discrimination and exclusion from political decision-

\textsuperscript{1} The three existing UN mechanisms related to the protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples include the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (Permanent Forum), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Permanent Forum is an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council, mandated to discuss economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health, and human rights.
making processes and effectively lobbying, Indigenous women participated in the peace talks (2012-2016). The Final Peace Agreement (2016) includes an “ethnic chapter” that contains provisions to ensure representation and oversight for Indigenous and marginalized groups in forging peace and address the needs and considerations of Indigenous and other communities across all sections of the Agreement. Further, as part of the comprehensive system of truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition created under the agreement, a Truth Commission (2018-2022) was established with its final report also shedding light on the destructive impact of the conflict on Indigenous Peoples, whereas the Special Jurisdiction for Peace recently opened a case focused on crimes committed during the conflict against ethnic communities and territories.

Until the end of the 20th century, Norwegian authorities periodically enacted policies against the Sámi that had grave consequences for their culture, language, identity and living conditions. The Act concerning the Sámi Parliament and other Sámi legal matters (The Sámi Act) was passed in 1987, and the Sámi Parliament opened in 1989. The Government’s responsibility to safeguard Sámi people’s rights to develop their own culture, language and society was adopted into the Norwegian Constitution in 1988. In 1990, Norway was the first country to ratify ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169. The Finnmark Act was passed in 2005, with the purpose of facilitating the management of land and natural resources for the benefit of the county’s inhabitants and particularly as a foundation for Sámi culture, reindeer husbandry, use of uncultivated land, business activities and society (section 1). The Government has also apologized for the previous assimilation policy directed against the Sámi. On 20 June 2017, the Norwegian Parliament established a commission to investigate the Norwegianisation (assimilation) policy and its effects, following inspiration from similar commissions in other countries.

Objectives of the meeting

The purpose of the PBC meeting is to share good practices and challenges of peace and reconciliation processes involving Indigenous Peoples in Canada, Colombia and Norway. It aims to discuss further how the Peacebuilding Commission can strengthen support to Indigenous Peoples’ peacebuilders and amplify their voices.

- What are ongoing good practices and efforts in Canada, Colombia, and Norway to ensure the inclusion and meaningful participation of Indigenous women, youth, and persons with disabilities in peace and reconciliation processes?

- Learning from the examples of Canada, Colombia, and Norway, what international support and approaches can the Peacebuilding Commission promote to strengthen the voice and visibility of Indigenous Peoples’ peacebuilders as well as to improve their social, political, and economic conditions?

- How could the Peacebuilding Commission promote good practices to be applied in other States and promote connections among Indigenous Peoples’ peacebuilders?

Tentative agenda
• Opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Ivan Šimonović, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission
• Remarks by Mr. Dario Mejia Montalvo, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
• Briefings by Indigenous Peoples’ representatives from:
  • Ms. Patricia Tobón, General Director for the Unit for the Victims’ in Colombia
  • Ms. Marit Myrvoll, Sami social anthropologist and member of the Norwegian Truth and Reconciliation Commission
  • Canada (TBC)
• Remarks by Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, ASG for Peacebuilding Support
• Interventions from the floor, including by the Ambassadors of Colombia, Norway and Canada, and by the Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples
• Concluding remarks by the PBC Chair

2 Mexico chairs the Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples. This is a multi-regional group of 22 States, which includes: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Norway, New Zealand, Spain, Paraguay, Peru, and the United States of America.