



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

## **UNESCO Statement**

on the occasion of the  
**the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on  
Indigenous Issues**

(Item11c- Follow up to the Outcome document)

Friday, 20 April 2018

10:00-13:00

Madam Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is our pleasure to present this statement on behalf of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) at the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Madam Chairperson,

UNESCO's engagement with indigenous peoples is framed by our mission to promote peace by encouraging intercultural dialogue and by reinforcing sustainable development through education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information. Through our programmes, UNESCO addresses a number of priorities for indigenous peoples, including endangered languages, mother tongue education, education for sustainable development, indigenous knowledge in scientific and environmental decision-making, cultural diversity, and building knowledge societies.

We are pleased to inform the Permanent Forum that one of the outcomes of the 202<sup>nd</sup> session of the UNESCO Executive Board is the UNESCO Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples. In this session, which took place in October 2017, the Executive Board considered a revised draft of the policy and took note with satisfaction of the UNESCO Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples. UNESCO's policy aligns with that of the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and describes how this is being implemented across UNESCO's Sectors.

The policy recognizes that indigenous peoples “continue to be disproportionately represented among the most marginalized and impoverished segments of society” and contributes to the UNESCO Medium Term Strategy. UNESCO’s 2014-2021 Medium Term Strategy affirms that the Organization will implement the (UNDRIP) across all relevant programme areas and develop and implement a UNESCO-wide policy on engaging with indigenous peoples.

In this light, UNESCO’s policy on engaging with indigenous peoples seeks to outline a house-wide approach that will guide all of UNESCO’s programme sectors in their interactions with indigenous peoples.

Madam Chair, over the years, UNESCO has had many interactions with indigenous peoples, both through its normative instruments and its technical programmes. We have some copies of a brochure available that highlight some of these areas, and points to the full policy that is available online.

In closing, we would like to acknowledge the support from indigenous peoples in the development of this policy. This includes Members of the Permanent Forum and EMRIP, and the Special Rapporteurs – both Ms Tauli Corpuz and Mr. Anaya and all the indigenous peoples’ organizations who contributed to the draft and review of the policy.

UNESCO looks forward to continuing and expanding its cooperation with indigenous peoples in all areas within its mandate.