



**H.E. MS. LACHEZARA STOEVA, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED
NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

**OPENING SESSION OF THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS
ISSUES**

New York, 17 April 2023

Distinguished Chairperson, Members of the Permanent Forum on
Indigenous Issues,

Honourable Elders,

Distinguished Representatives of Member States, Indigenous Peoples'
Organizations, UN system entities, intergovernmental
organizations and civil society,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to address you all at the twenty-second session of
the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The Permanent Forum
is a unique entity within the Economic and Social Council, and I am



delighted to see it back in full force this year, with the participation of so many of you today.

As a subsidiary body tasked with providing the Economic and Social Council with expert advice on Indigenous Peoples' issues, the Permanent Forum plays a crucial role in informing our deliberations and decisions. This is of particular importance in assisting us in our efforts towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The priority theme for this year's session on "Indigenous Peoples, human health, planetary and territorial health, and climate change: a rights-based approach" holds particular relevance for the implementation of the SDGs. It emphasizes the connections between human health and the health of the planet. The recognition of these connections is crucial at the time of designing integrated, holistic approaches for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Climate action and good health and well-being are two core goals of the 2030 Agenda. And, as we know, the SDGs are deeply interconnected. A lack of progress on one Goal hinders progress on all the others.



The priority theme is also especially relevant to the upcoming High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, taking place in July. This year the HLPF will review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, focusing on ‘Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels.’ The path towards recovery from the pandemic and the effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals requires an inclusive approach that champions people-centered, integrated, transformative policies.

Last year’s HLPF recognized the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Indigenous Peoples, particularly in relation to social discrimination and inequality, including gender inequality. The HLPF Ministerial Declaration also acknowledged and commended the important contributions of Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous women, as guardians of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems, and as agents of change in responding to climate change, highlighting the need to improve their ownership of natural and economic resources and access to financial services.

I invite the Permanent Forum to provide recommendations and inputs to the review of the SDGs at the 2023 HLPF, and to continue to support SDG implementation. Your inputs are invaluable for the



discussions around inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and for accelerating SDG achievement.

I also call upon Member States to strengthen their collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, not only in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, but also during the reporting process, through their Voluntary National Reviews. We are seeing some progress in this area, but it is crucial, going forward, to ensure that Indigenous Peoples' rights and priorities are contained in the Voluntary National Reviews.

In September this year, the United Nations will hold the second SDG Summit where Heads of State and Government will gather in New York, and at the mid-point of the 2030 Agenda, review its implementation at the highest level. The HLPF will serve as a springboard to the Summit, and an opportunity to reflect on transformative policies and actions to turbocharge the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to see increased cooperation and collaboration of the Permanent Forum with other ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, including the United Nations Forum on Forests and the United Nations Group of



Experts on Geographical Names. I also look forward to seeing the continued participation of Indigenous youth at the Youth Forum, together with the Indigenous Youth caucus, and to hear their voices and proposals to transform the world into a fairer, greener and more sustainable place.

Following the review of the work of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies in 2022, we are seeing greater communication and the sharing of information between the different bodies. The sharing of ideas and expertise strengthens the work of ECOSOC as a whole and is crucial in adopting integrated approaches to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

I wish you successful deliberations and I look forward to receiving the outcome of your discussions.

Thank you.