

Virtual Commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

10th August 2020

There are over 476 million indigenous peoples living in 90 countries around the world, accounting for 6,2 % of the global population. Indigenous peoples are the holders of unique cultures, traditions, and knowledge systems and have a special relationship with their lands and hold diverse concepts of development based on their own worldviews and priorities.

COVID-19 and indigenous peoples' resilience

COVID-19 presents a new threat to the health and survival of indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples face numerous challenges, such as little or poor access to sanitation, lack of clean water, inadequate medical services, widespread stigma and discrimination, as well as land grabbing and encroachment on their lands.

From the very outset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, indigenous peoples have been seeking their own solutions of the pandemic, as they have for centuries. They are taking action and drawing on traditional knowledge and practices, such as voluntary isolation in the Amazon, and sealing off their territories, like the Karen people of Thailand who have retrieved their ancient ritual of "Kroh Yee" (village closure) in efforts to fight the spread of COVID-19.

Indigenous peoples' practices have served an inspiration in combatting the pandemic, and their collective traditions provide a strong support system within their communities. They are also implementing preventive and protective measures, providing key messages and launching media campaigns in indigenous languages.

The commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples sought to promote these good practices as examples that can be emulated throughout the world.