



## ACSILs Input for OHCHR Stocktaking Report on existing procedures on the participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations 2024

### Existing procedures

1. *What are the current venues for Indigenous Peoples' participation in United Nations entities? In what meetings can Indigenous Peoples officially participate? Do they participate in meetings at the national or international levels? If so, where?*

ACSILs representatives have participated in the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples as well as the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. At the national level, Ryukyuan struggle to have adequate representation outside of Okinawa Prefecture (where we are the majority population). This is due almost entirely to the fact that Japan does not conduct population surveys based on ethnicity and Indigenous and ethnic minorities are not guaranteed meaningful participation in government.<sup>1</sup> Because of this, the highest ranking Uchinaanchu government official (Governor of Okinawa Prefecture) has had to leave Japan and travel to Geneva to appeal to the Human Rights Council for Ryukyuan rights. ACSILs members do this work more frequently by participating in multiple UN meetings, however we are not representatives of any government entity.

2. *What are the modalities of Indigenous Peoples' participation? How can they participate? What can they do during the meetings? How can they influence the outcomes of the meetings? Do they participate online or in person? How does your entity guarantee the meaningful, inclusive and safe participation of Indigenous Peoples?*

ACSILs members have participated in EMRIPS and UNPFII in person; with the exception of 2022 when we had one representative attend virtually in addition to online. How many representatives we send to any given meeting is dependent on how much we are able to crowdfund from the Uchinaanchu community. Due to the current and recent exchange rate of Japanese yen to American dollars, we have sent delegations that have more Uchinaanchu traveling from the United States and Brazil than from Ryukyu.

3. *What participation criteria do United Nations entities apply to accredit Indigenous Peoples' participants? Do Indigenous Peoples participate as organizations? Can Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions participate as such? Do they participate as individuals or independent experts? How does your entity guarantee the participation of Indigenous women, youth and persons with disabilities?*

---

<sup>1</sup> For more detailed information on participation of Ryukyuan (and Ainu) people in government. <https://indigenoustraveler.org/data-explorer/2>



ACSILs participates as an NGO without ECOSOC consultative status. We are however an Indigenous Peoples Organization.

4. *What are the selection criteria? What criteria do United Nations' entities use to select Indigenous Peoples to participate in the meetings?*

#### Good practices

1. *Since when have Indigenous Peoples participated in United Nations' entities meetings? How has their participation evolved?*

Ryukyuan have been attending UN meetings designed for Indigenous peoples since 1995, and ACSILs members attended the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues with the aid of Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact throughout the 2010s. Beginning in 2022, we began to attend the meetings (UNPFII and EMRIP) as ACSILs representatives. However, we are always the only Ryukyuan IPO able to attend the UNPFII, and assist other Ryukyuan NGOs in attending EMRIP. In the last five years we have not met any of our Ainu brothers or sisters at any UN meeting for Indigenous Peoples (more on suppositions as to why below).

2. *Please briefly describe any good practices within United Nations' entities that should be considered for this report.*

The UN entities should streamline a way for Indigenous peoples to meet with country representatives outside of the main meeting areas. We have not succeeded with meeting any Japanese Permanent Mission representatives in the last five years, because they do not respond to our emails, phone calls, or requests to meet in either New York or Geneva. Encounters in the hallway with Permanent Mission members in New York have led to them turning and briskly walking away; if UN bodies could provide facilitators for meetings or strongly encourage nations to meet with their Indigenous peoples this would be appreciated.

3. *Do United Nations' entities have an Indigenous advisory group or similar? If so, what are its functions?*
4. *What success factors could be highlighted from United Nations' entities experience with Indigenous Peoples' participation?*



## Existing gaps

1. *What have been the main challenges to Indigenous Peoples' participation in/engagement with United Nations' entities?*

The two biggest challenges that ACSILs faces in regards to participating in UN meetings are the high cost of travel and accommodations in both New York and Geneva, and the persistent language barrier. We believe that these two challenges also affect the meaningful participation of Ainu people in UN meetings. The language barrier in particular is stark, a number of people in the Ryukyu Islands speak English as a second language however, this has created a system in which the same people represent ACSILs repeatedly because of their language abilities. We do however, have native speakers of English as well as fluent English second language speakers so we are able to do meaningful work while in New York; Geneva however is more difficult because we do not have any French speakers currently able to represent ACSILs. We believe that if translators were provided to translate into Japanese this would increase the diversity of people that we can send to UN meetings, and would also increase the opportunities for Ainu people to participate as well.

2. *What action has been taken by United Nations' entities to address these gaps?*

## How the inputs will be used

A report will be presented to the Human Rights Council during its fifty-seventh session taking place from 9 September 2024 to 9 October 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights hereby requests contributions from United Nations entities, Indigenous Peoples, States, National Human Rights Institutions, Academics, and other Stakeholders for this report. Please note whether the submission is confidential and should not be shared publicly.