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## **Addressee: Pan American Health Organization, WHO**

**Paragraph #80 Session #21 (2022)**

### **Full Text**

The Permanent Forum reiterates its recommendation made at its eighteenth session for the Pan American Health Organization to prepare a study on the advancements in indigenous maternal health, including with the participation of indigenous midwives (E/2019/43, para. 45). The Permanent Forum also recommends that WHO prepare similar studies in other regions.

### **Comments**

#### **PAHO**

As a follow up to the UNPF Recommendation 45 of the 18th session, PAHO is elaborating a report on the advancements in indigenous maternal health, including best practices of indigenous midwives. This report will include advances from countries on the application of the tool for promoting culturally safe childbirth. PAHO has conducted extensively work in the field of maternal health, promoting an intercultural approach.

PAHO has had a strong focus on maternal mortality reduction among indigenous women prior to the pandemic. Currently one of the indicators of the PAHO Strategy and Plan of Action on Ethnicity and Health (2019-2025) monitors

maternal mortality reduction among indigenous women (and women from other groups). The tool for promoting culturally safe childbirth was recently published in PAHO. It is built mainly on consensus around good maternal and neonatal practices, as well as quality of care criteria for health service delivery. This tool promotes indigenous women's empowerment, autonomy, and decision-making on any issue related to their sexual and reproductive health (with an emphasis on childbirth care). It was developed with the participation of indigenous women and midwives. PAHO is working with indigenous midwives in the region to exchange knowledge in the field of maternal health. Relevant activities are being conducted in Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador.

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**WHO:**

Pursuant to this recommendation, WHO is organizing a side event on “indigenous women maternal health” during the twenty-second session (2023) of the UNPFII to raise awareness on this issue and feature national policies, strategies, plans and programming innovations in this area. PAHO/WHO Regional Office for the Americas has been asked to partner for this event, and experiences from at least 3 other WHO regions are now being identified for sharing at the event.

In addition, following the recommendation of the UNPFII, WHO Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing (MCA) has commenced the process of incorporating an indigenous approach into their work. MCA leads WHO’s work on the life course, aiming at ensuring that every pregnant woman, mother, newborn, child, adolescent, and older person will survive, thrive and enjoy health and well-being.

[WHO Contributions to the Report of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Twenty-Second Session, 2023](#)

**Area of Work**

Health, Indigenous Women and Girls