

## UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 25th Session (2026)

### Proposed Side Event: UNPFII Study on Indigenous Health as a Systems Integrator: Advancing UN System Coherence Through the Indigenous Determinants of Health Framework.

**Preferred Date:** Wednesday April 23rd

**Preferred time:** 3:00 pm to 4:15 pm

**Venue:** UN Headquarters

**Technical Requirements:** audiovisuals, laptops, microphones, camera, translation

**Organizers:** National Indian Health Board **Co-Sponsors:** Indigenous Determinants of Health Alliance  
Capital Native Nations (CNN)

**Moderator:** AC Locklear

**Translation:** English/Spanish/French

**Purpose:** This side event will introduce and provide an overview of the new UNPFII study positioning Indigenous health as a cross-sectoral indicator and systems integrator across United Nations mandates. Building on previous UNPFII Expert Member studies on the Indigenous Determinants of Health (IDH), this study advances the IDH framework as a practical compliance, coordination, and accountability platform to address fragmentation across climate, biodiversity, food systems, language, traditional medicine, and knowledge governance processes. The event aims to demonstrate how Indigenous health reflects the cumulative effects of institutional decisions across sectors and how the IDH framework can support coherent, rights-based implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

**Description:** The side event will review and summarize the UNPFII study on Indigenous Health as a Systems Integrator. The study identifies fragmentation across United Nations bodies as a structural challenge affecting Indigenous wellbeing. Decisions related to climate, biodiversity, food systems, language, traditional medicine, intellectual property, and governance are often developed in silos, without considering their cumulative impacts on Indigenous Peoples. This fragmentation weakens accountability, reduces policy coherence, and burdens Indigenous representatives with navigating disconnected processes. The study proposes the Indigenous Determinants of Health (IDH) framework as a shared reference point to strengthen institutional coherence. Rather than creating new mandates, the framework aligns existing ones by positioning Indigenous health as a measurable indicator of system integrity and rights-based implementation.

The discussion will highlight:

- **Indigenous health as a measurable indicator of system integrity** across governance, environmental, cultural, economic, and health mandates, reflecting the cumulative effects of institutional decisions.
- **Protective and risk indicators, including upstream and downstream determinants**, to identify structural drivers of inequity and address root causes rather than symptoms.
- **The impacts of fragmentation across agencies such as CBD, WIPO, WHO Traditional Medicine, PAHO, UNFCCC, and UNCCD**, particularly where participation and accountability standards differ.
- **Practical pathways for integrating IDH into monitoring and implementation**, including incorporating indicators into reporting frameworks and strengthening coordinated, rights-holder engagement without creating new mandates.

## **Proposed Structure (75 minutes)**

### **1. Introduction (5 min)**

### **2. Main Presentation (30 minutes)** Overview of the study's key findings and recommendations, including:

- Indigenous health as a cross-sectoral systems indicator
- Institutional fragmentation as a structural driver of inequity
- IDH as a compliance and coherence platform
- Pathways for adoption across UN agencies

### **2. Applied Examples (15 minutes)**

Case studies demonstrating operationalization of the IDH framework in practice.

The example may focus on Indigenous midwifery and traditional medicine governance, or Indigenous food systems and FAO processes, illustrating how institutional design can either reinforce fragmentation or promote coordinated, culturally safe implementation.

### **3. Interactive Dialogue (25 minutes)**

Open discussion to:

- Identify practical steps for inter-agency alignment
- Explore integration of IDH indicators into reporting and monitoring mechanisms
- Strengthen implementation of UNDRIP across mandates
- Inform recommendations for inclusion in the UNPFII 2026 report

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## **Expected Outcomes**

- Increased understanding of Indigenous health as a unifying systems lens across UN mandates
- Strengthened dialogue on reducing fragmentation
- Identification of actionable pathways for integrating IDH into institutional monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- Support for adoption of recommendations advancing coherence, accountability, and culturally safe engagement