

# UN underscores the need to celebrate indigenous peoples, not confine them

While migration offers some opportunities, such as the hope of peace, security and better social services, Mr. Liu outlined the challenges, including “poverty, little or no access to education, employment or other social services, as well as human trafficking, gang-related and other violence.”

And yet, indigenous peoples have created ways to revitalize their cultures and strengthen their identities.

Taking the podium, Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, noted that about 65 million have been forcibly displaced overall, including some 21 million refugees, three million asylum seekers and 40 million internally displaced persons.

“Indigenous peoples are not on the margins of these movements,” she said, pointing out that some migrate for economic reasons, others for natural disasters, conflicts or to protect human rights.

“For some Aboriginal Peoples such as Inuit, Sami, Fulani, Tuareg, displacement is also part of the traditional way of life,” she added.

Ms. Aboubakrine explained that these displacements have been handed down for thousands of years from generation to generation, as a way of preserving natural resources, the environment and biodiversity, saying that it is “crucial” for indigenous survival.

She concluded by urging Member States and the international community to revise migration policies to align with international human rights treaties, including the UN Declaration on the [Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

Opening the panel discussion, Rosa Montezuma expressed pride in being a young indigenous woman, the first to hold the title of “Miss Panama 2018,” expressing her hope of using the opportunity to demonstrate that indigenous women are capable, talented and professional. “Indigenous peoples have the right to live with respect, free of all kinds of discrimination,” she said.