

**Concept note and agenda**  
**REGIONAL MEETING ON ETHNICITY AND HEALTH IN THE AMERICAS**  
**7-8 December 2015**

**Introduction**

Available data indicates that indigenous and afrodescent peoples are amongst the most marginalized populations of the region, encountering considerable challenges with regards to social and health conditions and with higher levels of rurality or urban marginality, unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy. They have less access to, and lower utilization of, health services, particularly quality health services, as compared to the rest of the population. Therefore, their health outcomes are poorer, presenting greater morbidity and mortality both from communicable and chronic diseases as well as external causes.

Since 1993, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) approved significant Resolutions to address these challenges and to advance the work on ethnicity and health in the region. In 1993, Member States reached consensus in recognizing the deficits in both living conditions and health among the indigenous peoples of the Americas. The Resolution<sup>1</sup> aimed to implement the SAPIA initiative (Health of the Indigenous Peoples Initiative of the Americas) and was reinforced by other two Resolutions on indigenous peoples approved in 1997 and 2006<sup>2</sup>. The Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage, approved in 2014, specifically refers to indigenous and afro-descendant as some of the most affected groups facing problems of exclusion and lack of access to appropriate quality services.

In addition, at global levels, there has been increasing attention to indigenous and afrodescent issues: the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) was held at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2014. The Outcome Document highlights the importance of indigenous peoples' health practices and their traditional medicine and knowledge and specifically refers to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for indigenous individuals.

Moreover, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2015-2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent (resolution 68/237) citing the need to strengthen national, regional and international cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent, and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society.

However, despite these advances in normative frameworks, there remain significant ethnic disparities in health across the Americas region and there is an urgent need to provide opportunities for actors to network and share conceptual frameworks, challenges and opportunities, as well as learn from existing initiatives, such as the Japer US-Brazil Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality.

---

<sup>1</sup> CD37.R5 Health of Indigenous Peoples

<sup>2</sup> CD40.R6, The Health of Indigenous Peoples and CD47.R18, the Health of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas

## **Justification**

As noted above, PAHO's normative framework considerably favors the implementation of actions aimed at tackling the inequities that continue to persist in the region based on ethnic origin. Moreover, its Strategic Plan 2014-2019 includes ethnicity as a cross-cutting theme, alongside with gender, equity and human rights.

This meeting brings together representatives of the Ministries of Health from the Region as well as members of civil society and global experts to highlight some of the key issues in addressing ethnic disparities in health and to share their experiences and knowledge in order to provide impetus and best inform future actions.

Specifically, the meeting will also serve as a platform for discussion upon next steps towards a Strategy and Plan of Action to be presented to PAHO's Governing Bodies in 2017 and will also facilitate and support dialogue on the JAPER initiative: The US-Brazil Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality.

The U.S.-Brazil Joint Action Plan, a bilateral instrument that targets racial discrimination, provides a platform for cooperation between the two countries to combat racial discrimination broadly, and to share best practices in tackling discrimination in education, law enforcement, labor, health, gender-based violence, economic empowerment, and many other areas.

## **Objectives of the meeting**

- ✓ Discuss conceptual frameworks on Ethnicity and Health;
- ✓ Share experiences and highlight advances, challenges and opportunities in the field of Ethnicity and Health in the Region;
- ✓ Discuss next steps towards a Strategy and Plan of Action on Ethnicity and Health for the Americas;
- ✓ Facilitate and support dialogue on the JAPER initiative: The US-Brazil Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality

## **Expected results**

- Increased knowledge on conceptual frameworks, experiences, challenges and opportunities related to Ethnicity and Health in the Americas;
- Shared experiences from countries in the region of work on addressing ethnic disparities in health;
- Dialogue facilitated on the JAPER Initiative
- Identification of next steps towards the development of an Action Plan for the Region on Ethnicity and Health, and amongst other initiatives, for the US/Brazil collaboration;

**Participants:** Representatives from the Ministries of Health, and other relevant Governmental sectors, from PAHO's member states; Academia; global and regional experts in the field of Ethnicity and Health; prominent members of indigenous and Afrodescendent populations, members of civil society, PAHO focal points on Ethnicity and PAHO Regional Advisors on key issues; representatives from the US Department of Health and Human Services (e.g. CDC); representatives from the Brazil Ministry of Health (e.g. SEPPIR); representatives from UN entities and other international and bilateral agencies;

**Place:** Headquarters of the Pan American Health Organization, Washington, DC

DRAFT PROGRAM

**Day 1: Regional Meeting on Ethnicity and Health in the Americas: Concepts, experiences and opportunities**

**Day 2: Workshop on identifying the way forward to address ethnic disparities in health in the Americas**

<b>PROGRAM</b>		
<b>Monday 7 December (day 1) Regional Meeting</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Moderator</b>
8:30 – 09:00	<b>Registration</b>	PAHO/GD
09:00-09.45	<b>Opening remarks</b> PAHO Director (TBC) Nadine Gracia (HHS) Megan Davis (Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues) / Secretariat Special Rapporteur (IACHR) Director, FGL	AD
09.45-10.15	<b>Keynote</b> Victoria Tauli-Corpus, Special Rapporteur (UN)	Deputy Director
10:15-11:15	<b><u>Panel 1: Ethnic inequalities in health: concepts, realities and approaches</u></b>  <b>PAHO’s approach to addressing ethnic inequalities in health in the Americas</b> (A. Coates, PAHO)  <b>Social determinants of ethnic inequalities in health</b> (G. Galvao, PAHO)  <b>Cultural determinants of health/ Ethnic/racial discrimination in health care provision</b> (A. Castro, University of Tulane)  <b>CDC’s approach to ethnicity and race</b> (Leandris Liburd, CDC)  <b>Brazil’s approach to racial discrimination in health</b> ( Rui Leandro Da Silva Santos, Ministry of Health)	Sandra del Pino

11:15 – 11:30	Coffee break	
11:30 – 12:45	<p><b><u>Panel 2: Measurement and evidence</u></b></p> <p><b>Measurement challenges</b> (J. Morrison, IDB)</p> <p><b>Identifying ethnicity as a stratifier: the ethnic variable in health information systems</b> (Fabiana del Popolo, ECLAC, and L. Jara, PAHO)</p> <p><b>Constructing epidemiological profiles of ethnic inequalities in health</b> (O. Mujica, PAHO)</p> <p><b>Building the evidence on interventions that reduce disparities in health</b> (Dr. Robert Hahn, CDC)</p>	Julio Dicient Taillepierre
12:45 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00-15:30	<p><b><u>Panel 3: Intersecting inequalities</u></b></p> <p><b>Intersecting inequalities: poverty, gender, ethnicity, race</b> (Carlos Quesada, International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights)</p> <p><b>Gender inequalities and reproductive rights for indigenous women</b> (Tarcila Rivera, Continental Link of Indigenous Women of the Americas)</p> <p><b>Violence Against Indigenous and Afrodescendent Women</b> (A. Guedes, PAHO)</p> <p><b>Framework for addressing ethnicity and gender identity in healthcare</b> (JoAnne Keatley)</p>	TBD
15:30-15:45	Coffee break	

<p><b>15.45 – 17.15</b></p>	<p><b><u>Panel 4: Global and Regional Opportunities</u></b></p> <p><b>Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda</b> (Elsa Stamatopoulou, Columbia University, TBC)</p> <p><b>The Indigenous Fund</b> (M. Cunningham, Indigenous Fund, TBC)</p> <p><b>The Decade on Afrodescendent Health</b> (Carmen Ines Vasquez, Vice-Minister, Colombia)</p> <p><b>A renewed promise</b> (UNICEF, TBC)</p> <p><b>Human Rights Frameworks for Ethnicity</b> (J. Vasquez, PAHO)</p>	
<p><b>17.15 – 17.30</b></p>	<p><b>Day One: Reflections and Closure</b> (DD and Leandris Liburd, CDC)</p>	

<b>PROGRAM</b>		
<b>8 December 2015 (Day 2) Workshop</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
09:00-10:30	<p><b>Panel 5: Initiatives and Proposals</b></p> <p><b>PAHO Regional Strategy on Ethnicity and Health</b> (S. del Pino, PAHO)</p> <p><b>The US/Brazil Binational Collaborations</b> (CDC, Brazil)</p> <p><b>Health experiences in Metis Nation</b> (Eduardo Vides, Canadian Partnership against Cancer)</p> <p><b>Ethnicity and mental health</b> (Guyana, TBC)</p> <p><b>Ethnic inequalities in health</b> (Carlos. Rodriguez-Diaz, University of Puerto Rico, School of Public Health)</p>	Anna Coates
10.30-10.45	<b>Introduction to methodology for Working Groups</b>	Sandra del Pino and Julio Dicient
10.45 – 11:15	Coffee break	
11:15-13.00	<p><b>Working Groups PAHO</b></p> <p><b><u>Working Group 1</u>: Targeted and intercultural approaches</b></p> <p><b><u>Working Group 2</u>: Intersectorial actions and engagement</b></p> <p><b><u>Working Group 3</u>: Information</b></p> <p><b><u>Working Group 4</u>: Capacity building</b></p> <p><b><u>Working Group 5</u>: The JAPER Initiative</b></p>	
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00-14:30	<b>Presentation of Working Groups</b>	

14:30 – 16:15	<b>Group 1 (PAHO): Steps towards an Action Plan Strategy and Plan of Action on Ethnicity and Health for the Region</b>  <b>Group 2: JAPER Initiative</b>	
16:15 – 16:30	Coffee break	
16:30-17:30	<b>Presentation and summaries of working groups</b>	
17:30-18:00	<b>Closing and way forward (AD)</b>	