

For International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples Sunday 9 August 2015

“Indigenous Peoples’ participation is key to the advancement of their human rights”

GENEVA (9 August 2015) – Message by the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples** to mark the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Sunday 9 August 2015*

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples provides the international community with the opportunity to reflect both on the continuing human rights concerns of indigenous peoples as well as the progress made towards achieving the goals set by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This year's theme, “Post 2015 Agenda: Ensuring indigenous peoples' health and well-being”, focuses on issues of fundamental importance to the realization of all other human rights.

“Indigenous children and youth should enjoy the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health. It is impossible to discuss the right to development without ensuring the right to health,” said Alexey Tsykarev, Chairperson of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Health issues are exacerbated by the fact that indigenous peoples often find themselves in a disadvantaged socio-economic position. They disproportionately suffer from child poverty, higher rates of detention and limited access to education when compared to non-indigenous peoples. Indigenous women, children and persons with disabilities are particularly at risk of marginalisation.

For indigenous peoples, raising their issues in international fora is a means of combatting marginalisation, denouncing human rights violations and promoting their rights and cultures. The participation of indigenous peoples in processes that directly affect their lives also gives greater legitimacy to the international human rights movement.

As the Post 2015 Development Agenda is being set by the international community, it is immensely important for indigenous voices to be heard.

“Indigenous peoples should actively take part in the implementation of the new sustainable development goals in their own countries, as well as in the monitoring and accountability mechanisms that are being established. We also strongly support the collection of disaggregated data relevant to indigenous peoples in order to better assess their specific needs and issues,” said Legborsi Saro Pyagbara, Chairperson of the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples.

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* The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was established in 2007 by the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary body of the Council. The Working Group is composed of five independent experts serving in their personal capacities: Mr. Albert K. Barume (Democratic Republic of Congo), Mr. Albert Deterville (Saint Lucia), Mr. Wilton Littlechild (Canada), Mr. Edtami Mansayagan (Philippines) and Mr. Alexey Tsykarev (Russian Federation). Learn more, visit: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Pages/EMRIPIndex.aspx>

** The UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples was established in 1985 by the General Assembly and provides support to indigenous peoples' representatives to participate in the sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Human Rights Council and of treaty bodies. The Fund is supported by voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities. The Fund is administered by the Secretary-General assisted by a Board of Trustees. The members of the Board are: Mr. Legborsi Saro Pyagbara (Nigeria), Ms. Myrna Cunningham (Nicaragua), Ms. Anne Nuorgam (Finland), Mr. Binota Dhamai (Bangladesh), Ms. Claire Charters (New Zealand).

To learn more about the Voluntary Fund, please visit:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/IPeoplesFund/Pages/IPeoplesFundIndex.aspx>

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