



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES INDIGENOUS VOICES

PRESS RELEASE

Indigenous Peoples' Forum to Mark 5th Anniversary of Declaration on Indigenous Rights

UNITED NATIONS, 4 May 2012 – A High-level Event convened by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to mark the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will be part of a two-week meeting beginning at United Nations Headquarters in New York on Monday.

The High-level Event, to take place in the General Assembly Hall on Thursday, 17 May, will celebrate the adoption of the UN Declaration, reflect on good practices and assess the UN Declaration's role in fulfilling the rights of the world's indigenous peoples.

Almost 2,000 indigenous participants from all regions of the world are expected to take part in the eleventh session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, from 7 to 18 May, to engage with Members of the Permanent Forum, UN Member States, and UN agencies.

“The Forum can play an important role in protecting and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples around the world,” said the Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. “We need to make the rights enshrined in the UN Declaration a reality.”

Other themes to be addressed during the session include the rights of indigenous peoples to food and food sovereignty, the situation of indigenous peoples in Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia, the upcoming World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (2014), and the special theme of the enduring impact of the “Doctrine of Discovery” – the way courts justified the annexing of indigenous lands – and the right to redress for past conquests.

Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro will address the opening session of the Forum in the UN General Assembly Hall on Monday, 7 May, alongside Mr. Bienvenu Okiemy, Minister of Communications and Relations with Parliament of the Republic of the Congo. The opening welcome will be made by the traditional Chief of the Onondaga Nation, Todadaho Sid Hill and a ceremonial prayer will be offered by a Mayan elder.



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Side Events

There will be more than 50 side events taking place during the two-week session, organized by Member States, UN entities, other intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum and other stakeholders.

The opening of the exhibit, “Indigenous Peoples and Food Sovereignty,” and a cultural event, with the bands Sak Tzevul from Chiapas and Andes Manta from Ecuador, as well as other indigenous artists from around the world, will take place on Tuesday evening, 8 May, starting at 6:15 pm in the Visitors’ Lobby of the United Nations.

Background

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in July 2000. The Forum provides expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the UN System through the Council; raises awareness and promotes the integration and coordination of relevant activities within the UN System; and disseminates information on indigenous issues.

The Permanent Forum is comprised of 16 independent experts, functioning in their personal capacity. The Economic and Social Council appoints the members, eight of whom are nominated by governments and eight by indigenous organizations from the different regions of the world.

The outcome of the Forum’s eleventh session is expected to be a report to the Economic and Social Council, including draft decisions recommended for adoption by the Council.

Press conferences are scheduled on 7 May at 1:00 p.m., and on 10, 14 and 17 May at 11 a.m. in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium at UN Headquarters.

The press conferences, the opening session on 7 May and the high-level event on 17 May will be **webcast live** at www.un.org/webcast.

Journalists without United Nations press accreditation, please refer to the website of the Media and Accreditation Liaison Unit for details:

<http://www.un.org/en/media/accreditation> or call +1 212-963-6934 or 212-963-6937

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For more information on the eleventh session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, please see: <http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples.aspx>