



THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE

Press release

Despite progress, rights of Indigenous Peoples continue to be violated, ten years after adoption of UN Declaration

United Nations, 27 January 2017 – Experts from around the world met at United Nations Headquarters on 25-27 January to assess the achievements and challenges in putting into effect the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, almost ten years after the landmark document was adopted.

“At the global level, much has been done to promote the rights of indigenous peoples,” says Les Malezer, member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, emphasizing that “much more needs to happen at national and regional level to improve the lives of indigenous peoples and their control to decide their own futures.”

At the meeting, experts provided examples of how provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have been integrated at national, regional and global levels. Nationally, indigenous peoples’ rights have been recognized in Constitutions and laws in several countries. However, there is still an urgent need to harmonize national policies and legislations with the UN Declaration. Advances at the global level include the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (2014) and the inclusion of indigenous peoples’ rights in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as well as the Paris Agreement. Despite these advances, indigenous peoples continue to face violations of their rights. Indigenous participants at the meeting emphasized in particular the increased threats to indigenous human rights defenders, including the criminalization of social protests.

Member States, UN Agencies and Indigenous Peoples’ Organizations participated in the meeting, as well as the three indigenous-specific UN mechanisms -- the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Participants identified short, medium and long-term strategies to implement the UN Declaration, including its linkages with the Sustainable Development Goals. Concrete commitments amongst the three Mechanisms emerged under their mandates, on how to step up cooperation to take a strategic approach towards the implementation of the UN Declaration.





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The final report and recommendations of the expert group meeting will be submitted to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its 2017 session in April-May this year.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 2007, embodies a global consensus on individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples, including the rights to self-determination, traditional lands, education, culture, health, and to pursue a distinct vision of economic and social development.

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For more information on the UN and indigenous peoples, please see www.un.org/indigenous.

