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### Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

#### Sixth session

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda\*

#### **Implementation of recommendations on the six mandated areas and on MDGs**

### **Report of the Secretariat of the UNPFII on ongoing priorities and themes\*\***

#### *Executive summary*

The present report is an overview of developments under the mandated areas of the UNPFII since its Fifth Session, as reflected in the contributions of the United Nations system and activities of the members of the Forum and its Secretariat

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\* E/C.19/2007/1.

\*\* The present report was submitted late in order to include

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### INTRODUCTION

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1. Since the end of the Fifth Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), a variety of activities of relevance to indigenous peoples have been carried out by the intergovernmental system, governments, indigenous peoples' organizations and civil society at large, members of UNPFII and its Secretariat. In December 2006, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) invited written contributions on the follow-up to the Fifth Session and preparations for the Sixth Session of the Forum.

2. As at 9 March 2007 written submissions had been received from 18 UN and other inter-governmental entities and 3 governments, namely DESA, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), International Organization on Migration (IOM), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity (SCBD), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Programme for Development (UNDP), United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA), United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP) and the Department for Political Affairs (DPA), the latter two reporting for the first time. The Governments of Australia, Mexico and Spain and 2 non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the

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Economic and Social Council, namely International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), Tebtebba Foundation also submitted reports.

3. The present report provides a general overview of contributions received and of the main activities of members of the Forum and its Secretariat (SPFII) in promoting the implementation of the Forum's mandate and recommendations. A detailed database on the status of implementation of recommendations is posted on the website of SPFII, [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii). This report also contains information on the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People in response to the recommendation of the Permanent Forum contained in paragraph 128 of the report at its Sixth Session.

4. **Challenges identified by agencies in the implementation of the Forum's recommendations** can be summarized as follows: a) insufficient human and financial resources; b) lack of flexibility in national programmes; wide diversity and geographical dispersion of indigenous groups and the ensuing difficulty of defining common programme strategies; c) issues of security hampering humanitarian assistance; d) government's perception that the needs and rights of indigenous peoples were already included in public laws and policies and/or insufficient government commitment; e) political sensitivity of the issue, including the publication of data; f) the great number of the Forum's recommendations and the need for their progressive realization, based on longer-term processes.

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## I. DEVELOPMENTS UNDER THE MANDATED AREAS AND SPECIAL THEMES OF THE UNPFII, INCLUDING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### A. Economic and Social Development

Most of the written contributions from the United Nations system received for the Forum's Sixth Session are linked to economic and social development. **In the past year, there is a visible trend towards bringing more awareness and action on indigenous peoples' issues at the operational level.**

It is a welcome development that there is increased reporting on the field activities of the UN system regarding indigenous peoples. In various cases, agencies have requested feedback from their field offices and are reporting those to the Forum, as is for example the case with UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA. Not only is this a useful contribution towards the Forum's capacity to ascertain progress and improve its dialogue with agencies, but the preparation of reports in this manner increases awareness of agency staff on indigenous issues, including on challenges, gaps and opportunities. In order to be able to better measure progress, agencies were invited by DESA to report on the number of programmes they devote to indigenous peoples' issues and estimate relevant budgetary allocations. The reports received provide some information in this regard, which will be used as a baseline to measure progress in the future.

*Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (IASG)*

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Since its inception, the IASG has been steadily supporting the Forum, increasing awareness on indigenous issues and preparing papers annually for the Forum on complex issues, such as data collection and the MDGs. From fewer than 10 in 2002 now 30 inter-governmental entities are part of IASG, including IADB, Council of Europe and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The annual session of the IASG in September 2006 was hosted by IFAD and focused on “Development with Identity” with three sub-items: (a) Indigenous lands, Territories and Natural Resources, (b) Indigenous Peoples and Technology Development/Adoption and (c) Indigenous Culture and Development. Ms. Tauli-Corpuz, Mr. Dodson, Ms. Lux di Coti and Ms. Nicolaisen, UNPFII Members, also participated in the meeting. The annual report of the IASG appears in document E/?????????

## *United Nations Development Group (UNDG)*

A positive recent development is that the revised Guidelines of the Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF) finalized by the UNDG in February 2007 contain fifteen references to indigenous peoples. Since the UNDAF is a mandatory programming process of all United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs), the continuous inclusion of references to indigenous peoples is crucial for UNCTs in their operational work. With a view to assisting UNCTs to implement the Guidelines, the IASG, functioning as Task Team of the UNDG, has been working since November 2006 with the

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mandate to develop, by the end of 2007, guidelines for UNCTs to integrate indigenous issues in UN operational activities.

As part of capacity-building at field level, a draft resource-kit is being finalized in 2007 for use by UNCTs.

## *UN Country Team in Ecuador*

The UNCT in Ecuador continued the good example of coordination through its Inter-Agency Working Group on Interculturalism. The Team submitted its second report to the Forum, which appears in E/?????????.

## *Development account*

The project on *Engaging indigenous women: local-government capacity-building through new Technologies in Latin America*, under the 5th. Tranche of the Development Account is in the process of being launched by SPFII. The project, which will be conducted in partnership with local authorities and three indigenous peoples' organizations in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, and in cooperation with INSTRAW, is scheduled to be implemented from June 2007 through December 2009.

## *Review of MDG country reports*

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In accordance with the Forum's recommendation in paragraph 152 of the report at its Fifth Session, SPFII has continued to conduct desk reviews. Eleven MDG reports (MDGRs) were reviewed this year, with special emphasis on Latin America<sup>1</sup>, as this region was not covered in the review of last year. This year's review has lent added support to last year's findings. The conclusions and recommendations stemming from the review are highlighted below:

- a) Approximately 36% of the MDGRs reviewed sufficiently include indigenous issues (4 out of 11, namely Ecuador, Panama, Mexico, Venezuela). Another 36% address indigenous issues to varying degrees (Chile, Costa Rica, Honduras, Peru), while the remaining 28% do not mention indigenous peoples at all (Argentina, El Salvador, Paraguay)
- b) With few exceptions, the reports were produced by Governments and the UN system without making reference to input from indigenous peoples' organizations. Exceptions include Peru, where an indigenous organization participated in working groups for the report, and Mexico, where the Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas is listed as contributing agency.
- c) Reports that address indigenous peoples tend to do so in the context of MDG 1 (poverty and nutrition), MDG 2 (education), MDG 3 (gender equality) MDG 4 (child mortality) and MDG 5 (maternal mortality). While most MDGRs state that

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<sup>1</sup> The reports reviewed are the latest available for each of the following 11 countries, ranging in date of publication from 2003 to 2005: Argentina (2003), Chile (2005), Costa Rica (2004), Ecuador (2005), El Salvador (2004), Honduras (2003), Mexico (2005), Panama (2005), Paraguay (2003), Peru (2004), and Venezuela (2004). Reports are available on the UNDG's website at: <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=87>. The conclusions of SPFII's 2006 review of 25 MDGRs is contained in its report to the Forum, E/C.19/2006/8. For the full text of the review, see the website of SPFII, [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii).

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- indigenous peoples show a higher incidence of poverty, lower access to education, and are more likely to suffer from maternal and child mortality and morbidity, few reports consistently provide data to support these statements. Reports show considerable gaps in available data.
- d) With one exception (Honduras regarding the Garífunas), none of the reports address the potential impact of HIV/AIDS on the indigenous peoples.
  - e) While several reports mention indigenous peoples under the water and sanitation component of MDG 7, only one (Ecuador) addresses participation of indigenous peoples in the management of natural resources.
  - f) Only two of the MDGRs reviewed (Mexico and Panama) referred to indigenous peoples in the context of meeting Goal 8.
  - g) Several reports do not specifically refer to indigenous peoples, but use regional, and rural/urban disparities to describe disproportionate development. The most marginalized regions often correspond to indigenous lands and territories, although indigenous peoples are not explicitly mentioned (examples: northern departments in Argentina, Sierra Rural and Selva Rural in Peru, Chiapas and Oaxaca states in Mexico). Also, several reports include indigenous peoples within the grouping “vulnerable populations” (extremely poor/low-income population, rural population, indigenous and other ethnic minorities, disabled, etc.), but do not provide specific data.
  - h) Most MDGRs discuss, to varying degrees, the exclusion and disparities affecting indigenous peoples, as well as targeted interventions to address these challenges (some explicitly, others within the category of “vulnerable populations”). However,

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with few exceptions, very little mention is made of mechanisms through which to ensure the input and participation of indigenous peoples themselves in the design, implementation and monitoring of these policy interventions.

- i) Although most of the reports discuss the disparities affecting indigenous peoples, very few actually support these claims with disaggregated data showing a detailed picture of their socio-economic situation. The main exception is Panama, which disaggregates most indicators into Urban, Rural non-Indigenous and Rural Indigenous, although others, including Chile, Mexico, Peru and Ecuador have indigenous-specific data for a few of the targets.
- j) **States and cooperating UN agencies should incorporate the issues and challenges specifically faced by indigenous peoples directly into the framework of the MDGR by: (a) including indigenous peoples in the context of the overall report, including its planning; (b) including indigenous peoples in the context of meeting each specific goal; (c) including indigenous peoples' effective participation in the planning process of future interventions, as well as in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects that will directly or indirectly affect them; d) improving collection and disaggregation of data.**

*Review of Resident Coordinator reports*

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In 2006, SPFII carried out for the first time a desk review of ten Resident Coordinator (RC) reports from 2001 to 2003.<sup>2</sup> A review of select CCAs/UNDAFs, in addition to the one conducted in 2006, is currently under preparation and will be ready before the Sixth Session. The RC reports review represents part of the Secretariat's ongoing efforts to inform the Forum and the UN system about indigenous issues and to ascertain progress made towards their integration at field level. The following are the main conclusions and recommendations emanating from this review:

- a) An analysis of indigenous issues is not necessarily present in CCAs/UNDAFs even where indigenous peoples are a significant number in the country, or strategically important on the national agenda. Even where the situations of indigenous peoples or ethnic groups are analyzed in CCA/UNDAF, they are not necessarily reported in the RC reports. This may be due to a number of variables, including the fact that the RC report is an abbreviated document designed to touch on macro issues and highlight accomplishments of UN country programming at the UNDAF outcome level. Nevertheless, where explicit references are made to indigenous peoples in the strategies and objectives of UNDAFs, it is more likely that the RC reports will also include such references.
  
- b) Disaggregated data and analysis of the situation of indigenous peoples in the CCA is crucial in developing program strategies to address their problems.

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<sup>2</sup> Countries included in the review are: Bangladesh (2001), Brazil (2003), Colombia (2003), Guyana (2003), India (2005), Kenya (2003), Nepal (2003), Peru (2001), Philippines (2003), and Uganda (2003). The reports are available on the UNDG website at: <http://www.undg.org>.

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- c) Adoption of a rights-based approach to a CCA/UNDAF facilitates a deeper analysis and linkages between issues, particularly the structural and underlying causes of poverty, exclusion or discrimination. The quality of participation of indigenous peoples' organizations affects the type of CCA and UNDAF produced which can then serve as a strong advocacy and implementation instrument and direct UN programming more clearly.
  
- d) The inclusion of references to indigenous issues in the CCA/UNDAF Guidelines in 2004 and other awareness-raising efforts are slowly making an impact at the country level. For example, while the 2001 report of the RC in Uganda hardly included any references to indigenous peoples, the 2004 CCA made many direct and indirect such references, recommending among other things, the involvement of indigenous peoples in conflict resolution, natural resources management, health and sanitation.
  
- e) **CCAs and UNDAFs should provide a listing of partners involved in the preparatory process** (as for example provided in the Kenya UNDAF).
  
- f) **UNCTs should develop working groups or theme groups on indigenous issues, where relevant** (as for example in Ecuador).
  
- g) **UNCTs should develop public information and joint advocacy around the following:**

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- **The recommendations emanating annually from the UNPFII, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people and other relevant international bodies.**
- **The Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and its goal, objectives and Program of Action**
- **The International Day of the World's Indigenous People (9 August)**

## B. Environment

### *Environment and Traditional Knowledge*

Environment is the major focus of the Sixth Session theme “Territories, Lands and Natural Resources” Environment also includes a number of important related issues such as: traditional knowledge (TK), access and benefit-sharing (ABS), forests, climate change, environmental sustainability and desertification The processes under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), climate change and the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) are among the most relevant in this field. Another area that requires increased attention from the UNPFII is the Convention to Combat Desertification and the draft protection measures relating to indigenous traditional knowledge.

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Protection of indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge has been considered by a number of UN agencies including the CBD and the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC). The IGC was established by the WIPO General Assembly in October 2000 as an international forum for debate and dialogue concerning the interplay between intellectual property (IP), and traditional knowledge, genetic resources, and traditional cultural expressions (folklore). The linking of poverty and conservation continues to be a growing area of concern and activity.

In 2006, SFII provided written comments to WIPO's draft Provisions on the Protection of Traditional Cultural Expressions/Expressions of Folklore and the draft Provisions on the Protection of Traditional Knowledge, which have been developed by the IGC. In the written comments, it was pointed out that indigenous languages play a critical role in keeping traditional knowledge alive and what is under threat is not traditional knowledge itself, but the opportunities for young people to learn, practice and respect the knowledge production and practices of their elders.

Indigenous peoples' participation within the UNFF continues to be a challenge. In December 2006, an *ad hoc* expert group considered the content of a non-legally binding instrument (NLBI) on all types of forests. The draft composite text of the NLBI will serve as the basis for negotiations at UNFF-7 in April 2007. Indigenous peoples are mentioned briefly under the heading "Capacity Building and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies" in regards to their participation and empowerment in the development and implementation of forest

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management policies and programmes. However, NGOs, such as the Forest Peoples Program, have argued it is not yet clear how this instrument would achieve the goal of conserving forests and providing better protections for the rights of indigenous peoples. The main concern about the instrument has been the inadequate inclusion of social justice and human rights issues and the **restrictive participation practices for major groups in UNFF that fall behind best practices in other United Nations fora**<sup>3</sup>

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has been considering what can be done to reduce global warming and to cope with inevitable temperature increases. A number of States have approved an addition to the treaty, the Kyoto Protocol, which contains more powerful and legally binding measures. Within UNFCCC, indigenous peoples continue to advocate for the recognition of their human rights in regards to the impacts of climate change on their customary practices, access to genetic resources, traditional knowledge and economic opportunities.

Work with the Secretariat of the CBD continues around the protection of traditional knowledge and access and benefit-sharing of genetic resources. In January 2007, following the Forum's recommendation and the approval of the Economic and Social Council, an International Expert Group Meeting took place on "(T)he Convention on Biological Diversity's International Regime on Access and Benefit-Sharing and Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights". The presentations and discussions centered around:

- human rights treaties and indigenous peoples' rights to lands, waters, territories and natural resources, including rights to genetic resources and traditional knowledge;

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.forestpeoples.org/documents/ifi\\_igo/unff\\_brief\\_cpf\\_dec04\\_eng.shtml](http://www.forestpeoples.org/documents/ifi_igo/unff_brief_cpf_dec04_eng.shtml)

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- human rights treaties and other existing or emerging instruments that are applicable to ABS processes;
- customary laws that are vested in traditional knowledge protection and transmission;
- indigenous participation in the ABS processes;
- CBDs proposed certificate of origin and the source or legal providence for genetic resources;
- and the role of customary law in the protection of traditional knowledge and development of regimes on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing;

Ms Tauli-Corpuz, Mr Id Balkassm, Mr de Almeida, Mr Tamang, Ms Nicolaisen and Ms Kokajev attended the meeting. The report appears in E/C.19/ ????????

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is an area that relates strongly to indigenous peoples because of its programmes and projects aimed at involving the local communities to develop practical steps and measures to combat desertification in specific ecosystems. This is an area where links with indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge systems could provide some understanding of environmental sustainability because indigenous peoples have lived and sustained themselves in desert regions for millions of years.

## *Participation of UNPFII Members at relevant meetings*

Ms. Lux de Coti and SPFII attended the third session of the World Urban Forum, 19-23 June 2006, Vancouver, Canada, namely many of the Networking and Roundtable events including a

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Roundtable on Indigenous Peoples and the Media organized by the National Film Board of Canada and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. This was the very first time that indigenous issues had been included in the World Urban Forum.

Mr Littlechild, Mr Langeveldt and SPFII attended the international Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indigenous People and Migration, mandated by UNPFII, from 27 to 29 March 2007 in Santiago de Chile. The aims of the meeting, organized following a recommendation of the UNPFII in 2006, were to (i) assess impacts of the migration process on indigenous peoples; (ii) analyse living conditions and the human rights situation of indigenous peoples in urban areas with the aim of generating comprehensive knowledge based on latest research findings; (iii) evaluate current policies and practices and their effects on living conditions and the realisation of human rights of indigenous peoples in urban areas; and (iv) elaborate recommendations on how to improve living conditions of urban indigenous peoples and to contribute to the realisation of their human rights. The report of the meeting will be presented to the Forum.

Ms. Muzangi Mbela and Mr. Id Balkassm participated at the First World Francophone Indigenous Congress in Agadir, Morocco, from 2 to 6 November 2006. The Congress was attended by indigenous representatives from French speaking countries and areas, including Quebec, North and West Africa, French Guyana and New Caledonia. Several workshops were organized focusing on land and resources, identity and language, education, environment and conflict resolution.

**Indigenous peoples' participation is still a high priority in the environment area particularly within the UN system. Better coordination is required of issues such as**

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**traditional knowledge, access and benefit-sharing, sui generis systems, the impact of climate change and desertification on indigenous peoples and their communities.**

**A recommendation that the UNPFII could consider is mandating an expert meeting on indigenous peoples and the environment, with special emphasis on some of the less explored issues.**

## C. Education

The Forum has promoted mother tongue and bilingual education for indigenous children at its first five sessions by making substantive recommendations, including within the framework of MDG 2, on primary education for all. The findings of major studies and considerable research based on experiences of indigenous children and communities support the view of the Forum that mother tongue education, coupled with the gradual introduction of bilingual and inter-cultural education, benefits children towards effective learning and accessing higher education. The understanding of this issue is increasing among governments and development donor agencies and countries. UNICEF and UNESCO have been undertaking a number of initiatives in various countries where indigenous children have access to culturally and linguistically sensitive education. **The Forum may consider recommending that relevant UN agencies develop strategies for the systematic mainstreaming of mother tongue and bilingual education in primary education for indigenous children.**

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The role of boarding schools for indigenous children has attracted considerable international attention. As it was pointed out in the report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and fundamental freedom of indigenous people, negative, even tragic, impacts have been produced by boarding schools. The Rapporteur has given examples where indigenous communities were struggling to overcome the consequences of residential schools in which entire generations of children were removed from their families, placed in residential schools, the system having severely disrupted their families, their cultures and identities ([E/CN.4/2005/88/Add.3](#)). Numerous cases on grief suffered by indigenous peoples have been heard, because of the loss of culture, identity and meaningful parenting that has marked community life as a result of the residential school experience, and that may have been one of the factors leading to the high rate of suicide among Aboriginal adolescents. Legal claims have been filed and some dealt with through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. Monetary compensation packages to victims have also been offered., although this does not really provide a meaningful response to language and culture loss.

In some regions of the world, some indigenous communities seem to accept the concept of boarding schools, which they perceive as an important step for the successful social integration of their children into mainstream society, although they recognize the dilemma between keeping children in community schools where there is a clear lack of resources and qualified teachers and sending them to boarding schools away from their communities. The situation is hence complex and the contexts are different from region to region and from country to country. **The Forum may consider recommending in depth comprehensive and comparative case studies on this**

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**subject with a view to drawing lessons learned for governments when designing such educational systems as to avoid adverse consequences in the future.**

## D. Health

Reports received indicate that UN agencies, notably UNICEF and UNFPA, continue to incorporate indigenous issues into their health programming at country and regional levels, especially in terms of culturally sensitive approaches to health. **The Forum should continue encouraging experience sharing in health programming for indigenous peoples among UN agencies working in the field.**

Ms. Nicolaisen attended the Diabetes in Indigenous Peoples Forum in Melbourne, Australia, from 13 to 15 November 2006, where she delivered the keynote address on the subject “Curbing diabetes among indigenous peoples: a human rights approach.” Ms. Nicolaisen also published an article on indigenous peoples and diabetes in the journal *Diabetes Voice*.

**Given the gravity of the problem, it is important for UNPFII to continue drawing attention to diabetes and its effect on indigenous peoples, especially in terms of improved and disaggregated statistics, prevention, and access to treatment.**

It will also be important for WHO and UNAIDS to establish a systematic working relationship with UNPFII and the IASG., especially given their role in the implementation of the MDGs.

## E. Culture

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The Permanent Forum's recommendations on culture, but also all other areas of its mandate, have included indigenous peoples' holistic visions and perspectives. It is also noteworthy that 17 articles of the draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples essentially refer to culture. How to integrate such cultural perspectives in all the areas of work of the UN system constitutes a major focus for the Forum when addressing recommendations on culture, in addition to those specifically focusing on heritage, languages and other aspects. In this respect, the UN system has much to learn from indigenous peoples in terms of considering collectivity, participation and community-based approaches to development.

Among UN agencies, UNICEF and UNFPA have been engaged in training their staff on culturally sensitive approach to education and reproductive rights and have shared their experiences and good practices both at country and regional levels in their annual reports to the Forum. In both agencies, policy guidelines on inclusiveness and integration of a culturally sensitive approach in accordance with the international human rights standards are crucial for country programming. **The Forum may consider recommending that these agencies document, publish and widely distribute these good practices, in cooperation with and the participation of indigenous peoples' organizations, so these practices can be replicated and inspire other agencies and governments.**

## F. Human rights

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The report of OHCHR to the Forum is comprehensive this year in responding to the recommendations of the Forum. In 2006, OHCHR organized an important workshop on indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation. The Forum has expressed its concern about the situation of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation over the past sessions and has called on the UN system to develop strategies and programmes for the protection of their rights and territories.

International efforts to include indigenous peoples in standard-setting work at the UN have found resonance in the new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted on 13 December 2006 by the General Assembly.

Indigenous people with disabilities are mentioned in point (p) of the Preamble of the Convention.

At its Fifth Session, the Forum mandated a paper on how it can implement its mandate in the area of human rights without duplicating the work of other human rights bodies and mechanisms. The report prepared by Ms. Tauli-Corpuz (ref) provides thoughtful insights that constitute a good basis of discussion for the Forum on that matter.

Ms. Muzangi Mbela, participated in the Seminar “Indigenous Rights: instruments and good practices”, from 27 November to 1 December 2006, in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Participants were from French speaking countries of Central Africa including Burundi, Congo, Republic of Central Africa, Cameroon and Gabon. Issues discussed included identification of indigenous peoples and their challenges and priorities in the realization of MDGs, sub-regional specificities and

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challenges, integration of ILO Convention 169 in programming work and how to link sub-regional networks to international processes.

The draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the Human Rights Council in June 2006. The General Assembly, at its 61<sup>st</sup> session deferred consideration and action on the Declaration for further consultations with the aim of concluding consideration before the end of its current session in September 2007.

## G. Awareness raising, information and production of material

### *Events*

SPFII organized or co-organized 35 events / multistakeholder events in 2006. In addition, during the Fifth Session of UNPFII, SPFII coordinated 40 other events.

At the commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People at UN Headquarters in August 2006 a panel discussion was organized entitled "Indigenous Peoples: human rights, dignity and development with identity", as well as a cultural event and an art exhibit. Messages for the Day were issued by the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Coordinator of the Second International Decade, the Chairperson of UNPFII.

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To promote the presence and visibility of indigenous peoples during the discussions of the General Assembly, SPFII organized. (i) a dialogue and panel discussion, “Towards implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions of Mexico and Peru to the UN and OHCHR. (ii) a panel discussion and book launch, “Mairin Iwanka Raya, Indigenous Women Stand against Violence”, co-organized with the International Indigenous Women’s Forum (FIMI) and MADRE.

A delegation of indigenous leaders from various regions, the Chairperson of the UNPFII and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people met with the President of the General Assembly on 20 October 2006, regarding the draft Declaration.

A briefing on the draft Declaration was organized jointly by the Permanent Missions of Denmark, Mexico, Norway, Peru and Spain and co-sponsored by SPFII.

Two press conferences were organized by SPFII and co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Mexico (i) to discuss the draft Declaration, its history, significance and current status. (ii) to hear the views of indigenous leaders and human rights advocates on the Declaration

*Logo competition for indigenous children and youth.*

In order to promote further knowledge of the Forum and the UN among indigenous children and youth, at its Second Session, the Forum decided to organize an indigenous youth art competition

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for the design of a logo for the Forum. SPFII received a total of 148 entries from around the world.

The Bureau of UNPFII has chosen the artwork of Rebang Dewan, a Chackma child from Bangladesh, 12 years old, as the visual identifier of the Forum.

## *Material produced*

SPFII annually produces four internal newsletters addressed to UNPFII members and four public newsletters in English. Spanish translation of some issues has been provided thanks to the cooperation of UNICEF. **Translation of the newsletter into other languages is necessary.** The newsletter highlights the activities of UNPFII, its Secretariat and some news from field offices.

The public newsletter is available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/newsletter.html>

SPFII, in cooperation with DPI, has also been producing material for dissemination such as flyers, media advisories, factsheets and press releases for different activities and events.

The new SPFII website, launched in March 2006, is running in English and Spanish, while content has now been added in French and Russian. It is an important information and communication tool about UNPFII and other UN-related activities. **Translation and updating of website contents in official languages remains a major challenge.**

In a tribute to the thirty-fifth anniversary since the launch of the UN Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations, SPFII has begun making it available online in

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the SPFII website at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/spdaip.html>. This report, commonly known as “the Martinez Cobo Report”, has been unavailable in electronic form until now.

The 30-minute film on “Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations, Vol. I”, in French, English and Spanish produced by SPFII, was distributed to UN country offices, UN Information Centres and Governments with the purpose of promoting integration of indigenous issues in their work and providing general information on the UNPFII. On 2 February 2007, the film received the 2007 Finalist Award from the *New York Festivals (NY)* in the International Film & Video category. This award recognizes “The World’s Best Work” in informational, educational and industrial film productions and corporate videos. The 2007 Film & Video Awards received entries from over 41 countries around the world. The film can be downloaded from the website at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/multimedia.html> or copy obtained from SPFII.

## *State of the world’s indigenous people*

SPFII has responded to the Forum’s recommendation from the First Session for the production of a publication entitled the *State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples*. Work on the first issue of the publication is under way. In preparation for this publication, an Expert Group Meeting was held in Salekhard, Russian Federation, in December 2006. The meeting was attended by two Forum members; Mr. Sulyandziga and Mr. Langeveldt, in addition to the authors of the publication and other participants. The State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples is scheduled for publication in 2008.

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## H. Promotion of integration and coordination of indigenous issues

Considerable and increased inter-agency work on indigenous is conducted through the IASG, the UNDG and the Inter-Agency Network on Gender and Women's Equality (for details see sections A and J of this report). In addition, DESA's Intra-Departmental Task Force on Indigenous Issues has continued to bring together relevant DESA Divisions around certain common actions, including a DESA plan of action for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

SPFII and the Division of Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) are promoting an interdivisional project, on issues related to institutional capacity of local governments led by indigenous authorities. The project proposal has been sent to explore interest of potential donors.

### I. Indigenous children and youth

Indigenous children are specifically mentioned in Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It specifically states:

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

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It is obvious from various UN and other reports that the majority of indigenous youth and children do not enjoy the rights set in Article 30, continuing to live below the poverty line, whether in developed or developing countries. Country reports of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people provide an overview of the marginalization and vulnerable situation of youth and children, including social indicators suggesting lack access to education, health and housing services, over-representation in the youth justice system and involuntary displacement due to military conflict. It is also obvious that where indigenous men and women are at risk, their children may also be at risk.

In many countries, the existing social housing units for indigenous peoples are among the oldest, smallest and most crowded. Severe housing shortage adversely affects youth and children through related intra-family abuse and violence. In many instances, a high proportion of indigenous youth and children are placed in the care of Child and Family Services. Higher rates of suicide are evident in indigenous communities in comparison to other members of society and often thought to be related to family dysfunctions and social disorganization associated with a history of discrimination and marginalization. In some countries, the leading cause of death among indigenous children and youth is suicide. In one region in a developed country, the suicide rate among indigenous youth is 10 times higher than the national average.<sup>4</sup>

According to the Special Rapporteur, in regions of military conflict, the main tactics used to subjugate indigenous peoples include indiscriminate bombings, killings, arbitrary and unlawful detentions; roadblocks, burning of houses, looting and theft of animals; damage to sacred sites,

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<sup>4</sup> E/CN.4/2005/88/Add.3, p. 12.

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theft of medical equipment and damage to health centres; and theft of educational materials and damage to schools. There are also high rates of malnutrition among displaced indigenous peoples, and even cases of children dying of hunger. Surrounding municipalities are struggling to meet all the needs of the displaced indigenous peoples and in many instances, women have become the heads of their household and it is them and their children that suffer the worst consequences of involuntary displacement. For example, many of the women resort to begging and a large number of the children live in the streets. Suicides among indigenous youth are often attributed to the collective depression caused by the horrors of armed conflict.<sup>5</sup>

UN reports on children and youth related issues often do not provide specific data on indigenous children and youth. This is due in large, to the fact that very few countries collect reliable disaggregated data on the status of indigenous peoples. Fewer keep data specifically about indigenous youth. There are a number of reasons for this including the fact that there is no priority given to the status of indigenous children and youth and in many cases, an unwillingness to recognize their indigenous identity. Hence, it is difficult in some instances to obtain information on efforts to increase HIV knowledge among young people and whether adequate care and support for the million children orphaned by AIDS, and for millions of other children made vulnerable by the epidemic in some regions.

Indigenous youth and children residing in urban areas are often portrayed in a way that sensationalizes problems such as destructive behaviour, or risk-prone lifestyles. There is often very little understanding of the communal and kinship ties that often exist in these settings. Hence, youth living in an urban environment is often still living within a ‘community’, and as

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<sup>5</sup> E/CN.4/2005/88/Add.2, pp. 11-12

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such, has connections and relations with members within that community. The indigenous peoples within that community may not be of the same language group or from the same territories, but have a respect and knowledge of the nuances, protocols and practices peculiar to their place of living. Meaningful activities that achieve positive outcomes for youth are empowering and need to provide opportunities for the development and affirmation of cultural identity, and cultural knowledge and skills. For example, cultural activities in the form of drama, music and art is being used increasingly to raise awareness about relevant social concerns and to help youth to speak out on issues that affect them, such as racism

Youth also hold the environment as an important issues. At the second International Indigenous Youth Conference (IYIC) several resolutions and declarations were adopted that aimed at stopping the destructive impacts of globalization on indigenous lands, cultures, and peoples. The six-day meeting facilitated conversation between indigenous youth from countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Pacific, North America and Europe. Over 180 delegates gathered on Coast Salish territory in Vancouver, Canada, to share experiences and create a plan of action. In the final declaration, conference representatives called for an "end to all developmental aggression such as destructive dams, logging, and mining on or near indigenous lands and territories."<sup>6</sup>

UNPFII has actively contributed to the development of a General Comment on Indigenous Children and their Rights, to be presented to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Ms. Nicolaisen participated in a meeting with the lead authors in February 2007. **Following up on**

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<sup>6</sup> Angela Sterritt, [Weekly Indigenous News](#), July 15th, 2005

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**the General Comment and its implementation should be a priority for UNPFII in its work on indigenous children and youth.**

SPFII contributed to the UN Youth Report 2007 with a special section on “Indigenous youth and Latin America” highlighting a number of challenges that reinforce vulnerability of indigenous youth and actions that are needed to address the issues faced by indigenous youth in Latin America.

UNICEF and UNFPA have reported on their initiatives on indigenous children and youth. UNFPA has advocated for the inclusion of indigenous youth in national youth policies in Ecuador, Panama and Guatemala. UNICEF has pursued participatory studies on the situation of indigenous children in several countries, and supported bilingual and intercultural education projects and culturally sensitive approaches to maternal and child health.

**UNPFII should explore ways to host a summit on indigenous youth suicide, which is reaching crisis proportions.**

## J. Indigenous women

### *Task Force on Indigenous Women*

The Task Force on Indigenous Women of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANGWE) was established in 2004, is composed of 17 UN entities and chaired by

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SPFII. In 2005-2006, the Task Force collected 18 cases studies submitted by SCBD, FAO, IFAD, ILO, UNFPA, UNIFEM and UNDP about their work with indigenous women in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The publication entitled “Indigenous Women and the United Nations System” will be launched during the Sixth Session of the Forum. Following the Forum’s call for wide dissemination of good practices, the collection will be disseminated widely so that it may serve as a practical tool for future work of the UN system and other organizations engaging with indigenous peoples.

## *Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)*

During the 51th Session of the CSW, Ms. Kokajev on behalf of the Chairperson of UNPFII, Ms. Tauli-Corpuz, addressed the theme “The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child”, in February 2007. Ms Kokajev articulated the concerns and aspirations of Indigenous women and girls and appealed to the Commission to monitor the status of implementation of CSW resolution 49/7 entitled “Indigenous women beyond the ten-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action”.

SPFII co-sponsored, with MADRE, the International Indigenous Women’s Forum (FIMI), the Center for Women's Global Leadership and Amnesty International-Stop the Violence Against Women Campaign, a special event on violence against women.

## *Gender and Statistics*

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SPFII attended the 7th International Meeting on Gender Statistics within the MDGs framework, from 19 to 21 September 2006, in Aguascalientes, Mexico. The meeting was organized by UNIFEM, ECLAC, the National Institute of Women of Mexico (Inmujeres), the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Computer Sciences of Mexico (INEGI). SPFII addressed recommendations adopted by the Forum at its third, fourth and fifth sessions linking indigenous women and data collection and disaggregation and also presented activities taking place on data, indicators and gender issues, and conveyed the urgent need to include indigenous peoples in statistics, including indigenous women.

## *Third Meeting of UN Agencies and Indigenous Women's Organizations of Central America and Mexico*

From 21 to 22 June 2006, Ms. Lux de Coti and SPFII participated in the Third Meeting of UN Agencies and Indigenous Women's representatives of Central America and Mexico organized by UNIFEM and the Indigenous Women's Network from Central America. Some 30 indigenous representatives from Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Honduras participated, as well as 10 UN agencies, including UNICEF, UNESCO, PAHO, PNUD and OHCHR. A Plan of Action was developed by the participants where the main focus is the creation of a capacity building programme for indigenous women of the region with the support of UNIFEM and universities.

### *K. Data collection and disaggregation*

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In response to the importance that the Forum has placed on data collection and disaggregation, three regional meetings were organized by SPFII since the Forum's Fifth Session to develop indigenous specific indicators of well being and poverty. These meetings were held in Africa (Nairobi, Kenya), Asia (Baguio, Philippines), and Latin America and the Caribbean (Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua). A meeting regarding indicators and indigenous peoples in developed countries was held, in March 2006, in Ottawa, Canada. The outcomes of these meetings will be included in conference room papers to be submitted to the Forum and presented during its Sixth Session.

Data-related activities have taken place in Latin America regarding in particular indigenous women. An account of relevant meetings held since the Forum's Fifth Session appears under the chapter on women above.

DESA's Statistics Division has continued to disaggregate census data on its website, and UNICEF and ECLAC have reported data-related work.

As can be seen from this report, despite some progress, data collection and disaggregation regarding indigenous peoples continues to remain a challenge in all the mandated areas of the UNPFII.

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## II. TRUST FUND ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Following General Assembly resolutions 57/191 and 59/174, the Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues supports the UNPFII and projects and programmes during the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

In 2006, the Trust Fund received contributions from Cyprus, Finland, Mexico and IFAD for the funding of activities related to the UNPFII. From these, Finland earmarked an amount towards the development of a Fellowship Programme by the SPFII and IFAD earmarked its entire contribution to support the Forum's Programme on "Indigenous People and Indicators of Poverty and Well-being". The Trust Fund also received a public donation. The total amount of contributions received in 2006 relating to the activities of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues amounted to \$227,788.

In 2006 the Fund supported 14 travels of the Members of the Forum to meetings of relevance to the Forum's mandate. These missions provided the opportunity for Members to raise awareness and promote integration and coordination of activities relating to indigenous issues.

The Fund supported the provision of translation services during the Fifth Session of the UNPFII for in-session documents and side events and for translation of a SPFII Handbook from English into Russian and French that provides practical and background information.

The Fund also supported cultural events in connection with the commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People on 9 August and at the Forum's Fifth Session.

Based on the earmarked IFAD grant for the Forum's programme on "Indigenous Peoples and Indicators of Poverty and Well-Being", three regional consultations with indigenous experts were held in Africa, Asia and Latin America to capture indicators of indigenous peoples' poverty and well-being and to present a synthesis of the results to the Sixth Session of the UNPFII.

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From earmarked contributions of UNDP, the Fund supported a project on data collection and disaggregation in Nepal based on the 2001 census. Undertaken by Nepal Tamang Ghedung, an indigenous Nepali organization, along with consultants and a steering committee member from the Central Bureau of Statistics, the project has now been completed.

The “IWGIA Handbook on the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues” has now been published in Russian and disseminated to indigenous organizations and representatives in Russia.

SPFII’s fellowship programme, requested by UNPFII, has not yet materialized due to insufficient funds.

In connection with the Second Decade, in 2006, the Trust Fund has received contributions from: Algeria, Chile, Cyprus, Ecuador, Estonia, Mexico and Peru, as well as the Comision Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indigenas of Mexico for funding programmes and projects under the Second Decade. The balance of earmarked contributions from the first International Decade, in agreement with donors, Algeria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Japan and Libya, was transferred to the Fund. Thus, the total amount of funds received for the activities relating to the Second International Decade was \$270,159. Following the UNPFII Bureau’s recommendations in May 2006 regarding small grants DESA processed 21 such grants.

### III SECOND INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF THE WORLD’S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

A significant achievement in the first years of the Second Decade is the increased involvement of Member States, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations in indigenous issues. In April 2006 the Coordinator of the Second Decade and Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs transmitted the Decade’s Programme of Action and asked for constructive action

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in relation to the Decade. Twenty-two responses were received, mainly from UN agencies, with some promising plans<sup>7</sup>. Three substantive responses from Governments were also received, namely Greece, Panama and Spain, outlining their plans and policies. It is also noteworthy that intergovernmental organizations outside the UN system have also been increasingly engaging in indigenous issues. Responses to the Coordinators's letter were received from the Organization of American States, the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Council of Europe. DESA produced a Plan of Action for the Decade as the result of cooperation among six Divisions aiming at the mainstreaming of the objectives of the Second Decade within the work of the Department in the areas of statistics and population censuses, public administration, youth, women, sustainable development and the work of the UN Forum on Forests.

The Decade has also catalyzed the combined action of the UNDG as a whole. Following an initiative of the Coordinator, the UNDG transmitted the Programme of Action of the Decade to all UN country teams so that they can integrate it in their work. In addition, UNDG decided to launch a comprehensive effort for the systematic integration of indigenous issues in the field by initiating the elaboration of guidelines for the teams as well as of an action plan that will enhance their capacity in this area.

SPFII has not received a critical enough mass of responses regarding the Decade in order to be able to ascertain all progress made towards the Decade's goal, objectives and Programme of

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<sup>7</sup> OHCHR, UNDP, ILO, UNIFEM, FAO, WHO, UNFPA, DPI, UNESCO, WFP, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), SCBD, IMF, WTO and WIPO.

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Action. In the reports received for the Sixth Session, 7 of the 18 reports received as of 10 March 2007 made such references, pointing out that the activities of the agency on indigenous issues contribute to the implementation of the Decade's goal, objectives and Programme of Action

An analysis of the responses received also shows that the challenges that various actors bring out in terms of implementation are limited human and financial resources. This may be understandable, as the governmental and intergovernmental sectors, indigenous organizations and other parts of civil society are invited to address the rich policy recommendations emanating from a) the Permanent Forum, b) the General Assembly as far as the Decade is concerned, c) the Special Rapporteurs, and d) human rights treaty bodies. It is important to consider, however, that many of these recommendations and the objectives of the Decade are complementary and are not necessarily about providing more resources, but about changing the way of delivering programmes, especially in terms of promoting non-discrimination and inclusion, the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples, a development that is culturally appropriate, as well as establishing strong monitoring mechanisms (Objectives a, b, c and e of the Decade).

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