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Special Theme: "Climate Change, bio-cultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges"

Implementation of the recommendations on the six mandated areas of the permanent Forum and on the Millennium Development Goals

REPORT OF THE INTERAGENCY SUPPORT GROUP ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Submitted by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Summary

The 2007 meeting of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, held in Montreal, 17-19 September, was convened and hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in accordance with its terms of reference and the practice established in 2002, of annually rotating the chairing of the IASG among its members. The main theme of the meeting was "Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples".

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Terms of Reference of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues

Introduction

1. The 2007 meeting of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, held in Montreal, 17-19 September, was convened and hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in accordance with its terms of reference and the practice established in 2002, of annually rotating the chairing of the IASG among its members. The theme of the meeting was “Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples”. Other agenda items included: follow up of the 2006 annual IASG meeting; coordination of international work on indicators; areas for possible inter-agency collaboration; the status of the United Nations Development Guidelines; an internal reflection of the 6th session of the UNPFII; strengthening working methods, member support, and a revised terms of reference; and other matters. Under other matters the members of the IASG reflected on various mandates post-Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as provided updates on agency work relevant to indigenous peoples.

2. Representatives from the following United Nations agencies, multilateral organizations and international financial organizations participated: UNU IAS, World Bank, OHCHR, SPFII, IFAD, IOM, UNDP, WIPO, UN-HABITAT, UNESCO, ILO, Fondo Indigena, UNICEF, and the CBD.

3. The IASG regretted the absence of the Inter-American Development Bank, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the World Health Organization and UNEP from the meeting, especially given the special contributions that these organizations can make to many issues on the agenda, and in particular climate change. The IASG noted the restructuring of the IADB and expressed the hope that its focus on indigenous peoples’

issues will be maintained and strengthened, especially given the recent adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples.

4. The IASG welcomed the representation of the United Nations University - Institute of Advanced Studies, which attended the annual meeting for the first time. The representative, Sam Johnston, provided an update on the development of the new UNU Traditional Knowledge Institute, which will be hosted by Charles Darwin University, Australia, but have close associations with other partner campuses, especially James Cook University, Australia. The IASG welcomed the establishment of such an institute.

5. The following UNPFII members also participated in the meeting: Victoria Tauli-Corpus (Chair), Wilton Littlechild and Hassan Id Balkassm.

6. The present report highlights the main issues discussed and the agreements reached among the participants for follow-up. The agreements reached, including conclusions and recommendations are grouped according to items on the agenda¹.

7. The meeting was opened by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ahmed Djoghlaif, together with the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Sha Zukang². The members of the IASG were joined by the staff of the Convention on Biological Diversity for the opening session. The Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Victoria Tauli-Corpus, and the Chief of the Secretariat, Elsa Stamatopoulou,

¹ Refer programme of work annex I.

² Proxy Mr. Johan Scholvinck, Director, Division for Social Policy and Development.

also provided opening remarks. Wilton Littlechild provided an indigenous welcome to the meeting on behalf of the Cree peoples of Canada.

8. The members of the IASG thanked Ahmed Djoghlaif and the Convention staff for the substantive nature and high quality preparations of the meeting as well as the efficient and friendly organizational arrangements.

9. Section I of this report provides the statement of the IASG on the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Section II of this report provides a summary of the IASG's discussions based on the agenda items and sets out recommendations. Annex I contains the revised and adopted Terms of Reference.

I. UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

10. The Inter Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues hails the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007. The Declaration sends out a clear message to the entire international community, reaffirming the human rights of the world's indigenous peoples. This landmark action of the United Nations bears political, legal, symbolic and moral significance, as well as constituting a crucial opportunity for the UN System and other inter-governmental organizations to critically reflect upon their engagement with indigenous peoples' issues and, according to Article 42 of the Declaration, to promote respect for and full application of its provisions and follow-up its effectiveness. The IASG

pledges to advance the spirit and letter of the Declaration within our agencies' mandates and to ensure that the Declaration becomes a living document throughout our work.

11. The IASG will hold an extraordinary meeting before the seventh session of the UNPFII to discuss the impact of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on the work of the agencies and invites OHCHR and ILO to organize such meeting. In preparation for that meeting, each agency is invited to prepare a paper with reflections on the implications of the adoption of the Declaration for its work. The report of the meeting will be presented to the UNPFII and other relevant bodies.

12. Major areas for agency work already identified by the IASG include dissemination, capacity-building, programming, translation into indigenous languages and popularization of the Declaration.

II DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Climate Change³

13. The impact of climate change on indigenous communities, their traditional knowledge and related biological diversity is of great concern to members of the IASG. Indigenous peoples, often among the world's most marginalized and impoverished peoples will bear the brunt of the catastrophe of climate change and as such provide a human face to the climate change crises. The most advanced scientific research has concluded that changes in climate will gravely harm the health of their traditional lands and waters and that many of plants and animals upon which they depend for survival will be threatened by the immediate

impacts of climate change. It was felt that such conclusions require urgent and unprecedented efforts and interventions from the global community.

14. It was noted with concern that indigenous peoples in particular regions and situations, such as the Arctic, small islands and high altitudes, low-lying lands and river deltas, semi-humid and arid lands, and especially pastoralists and semi-nomadic peoples, are experiencing accelerated climate change and should thus be considered highly vulnerable.

15. Members of the IASG emphasized that despite such challenges, indigenous and local communities are not simply the passive victims of climate change but valuable partners in the global efforts to address climate change. It was noted that indigenous peoples are already using their traditional knowledge to address and adapt to climate change at the local level. Members of the IASG believe that indigenous peoples have a great deal to contribute in designing and implementing solutions to climate change. Adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change can be enhanced when they are informed by traditional knowledge and developed with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and organizations. Members of the IASG reported on the various initiatives of agencies concerning indigenous peoples and climate change and considered ways and means of effective collaboration in pursuit of mutual goals.

16. Recognizing that the theme of the seventh session of the UNPFII will be climate change members of the IASG agreed to prepare a common paper on climate change which will be presented to the seventh session of the UNPFII. John Scott, CBD, was appointed as the coordinator of the paper.

³ Including a discussion on bio-fuels, mono-cropping and agricultural biodiversity (tied in with climate change adaptation

17. It was recommended that the paper include an overview of the impact of climate change on indigenous peoples, especially the social, cultural, human rights and development impacts. The paper will also include an analysis of mitigation and adaptation issues, focusing on the challenges, threats and opportunities such measures pose for indigenous peoples. This may be enhanced through the inclusion of case studies on carbon-trading, bio-fuels and mono-cropping and other relevant issues including support for traditional livelihoods. The paper could also outline elements of a common approach by the UN system concerning indigenous peoples, their issues and climate change and on how the Declaration could provide a common framework. The IASG paper will appear as an addendum to this report.

18. Members of the IASG concluded their discussions on climate change by strongly recommending that the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and the comprehensive consideration of their issues be integrated in all work carried out by IASG agencies, including in their programmes, policies and strategies. It was noted that this will be of particular importance when addressing the issues of adaptation and mitigation, as well as emerging issues, such as bio-fuels.

B. Regional Level

19. The IASG noted that at present there are a number of positive opportunities for engagement on indigenous issues within the intergovernmental system at the regional level, especially in the African region. The IASG reiterated its commitment to cooperate and strategize at the regional level for positive outcomes in that regard. IASG cooperation and

and mitigation);

common projects at the regional level can draw from the IASG's own recommendations at its 2005 annual meeting devoted to that issue, the Plan of Action of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and the recommendations of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues resulting from its region-specific discussions⁴. It was agreed that a method of advancing inter-agency cooperation on indigenous peoples' issues at the regional level could be through the creation of regional email groups within the IASG. OHCHR offered to initiate an IASG discussion on the possibility of the IASG strategizing and promoting a regional approach.

C. Follow up to 2006 recommendations

20. The IASG took note of the fact that a satisfactory follow-up was provided by its member agencies to its 2006 recommendations.

D. Indicators

21. The IASG noted the rich ongoing work being carried out by various agencies on indicators relating to indigenous peoples' well-being and poverty, namely the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNESCO and the ILO. The IASG acknowledged the desirability of both global indicators that capture indigenous realities and the establishment of system indicators to measure progress within the international system.

22. The IASG, in order to support UN Country Teams and in view of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the upcoming adoption of the UNDG

⁴ At its fifth session in 2006 the UNPFII held a specific discussion on Africa and at its sixth session in 2007 the Forum held a

Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, decided to promote the adoption and use of provisional indicators resulting from current collaboration between indigenous peoples and international organizations, for testing as appropriate.

E. Funds

23. Given the existence of a number of UN system funds that can be accessed directly by indigenous peoples' organizations, the IASG invites the Secretariat of the UNPFII to create a webpage regarding these funds on its website and encourages IASG members and others to forward information on funding opportunities to the SPFII for collation and display. This webpage should list the funds with relevant contact information and/or provide a link supplemented by a brief description of the purpose of each fund⁵.

24. Given the complexity of administering indigenous issues related funds, the IASG recommended that a meeting be organized among relevant agency focal points dealing with funds to exchange experiences and lessons-learned.

F. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG)

25. IASG recognizes the efforts of its members in fulfilling its mandate regarding the United Nations Development Guidelines (UNDG). The work of the UNDG Task Team on Indigenous Issues in preparing guidelines for UN Country Teams (UNCTs) is particularly appreciated. The IASG looks forward to the adoption of the guidelines by the UNDG by the end of the year, as well as the action plan for their implementation. IASG will continue

discussion on Asia. Other region-specific discussions of the Forum will be held in subsequent sessions. The

recommendations of the Forum on Africa and Asia are contained in documents E/2006/43 and E/2007/43 respectively.

⁵ Such information has already been included in the website of SPFII, www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii.

to pursue work through the UNDG to promote the operationalization of indigenous-related programmes and policies at field level.

26. The IASG suggests that the UNDG Task Team on Indigenous Issues consider sending its draft guidelines to a selection of “One UN” pilot UNCTs for review and feedback, in addition to the eight UNCTs⁶ that have already been selected. IASG agencies with field presence are willing to support the Task Team by contacting their country office focal points so that they may alert the UN Resident Coordinator’s Offices and ensure that the UNCTs provide timely feedback on the Draft Guidelines.

27. The IASG recommends that the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Issues include the full text of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as an annex and that the UNDG Task Team produce a CD-Rom containing a resource kit and other relevant resources, tools and manuals, to supplement the Guidelines⁷. This resource kit should include a selection of the most relevant instruments and documents cited as references in the text, as well as agencies’ policies on indigenous issues.

G. Follow up on the recommendations of Expert Group Meeting on the “Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration”, 27-29 March 2007, Santiago, Chile

28. The EGM⁸ participants’ recommendations to International Community, including the United Nations, in para 41, included an invitation to the co-organizers of the EGM to consider the elaboration of guidelines for governments and local authorities to assist in the development

⁶ United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs)

⁷ The UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples Issues entered into force on 1 February 2008 and appear on SPFII’s website, www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii.

⁸ The Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration was an activity of the United Nations Housing Rights Programme (UNHRP) co-organized by UN-HABITAT, Secretariat of UNPFII, Latin America and the Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) – ECLAC, in cooperation with IOM. E/C.19/2007/CRP.8

of public policies related to indigenous peoples and their challenges faced in urban areas. UN-HABITAT will take the lead on developing the requested guidelines in collaboration with the other co-organizers pending the availability of funding. These guidelines are also part of the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples featured in the last paragraph of Table 1: Key Issues and Related Rights⁹.

H. Other matters - Migration

29. After an in-depth discussion on migration and indigenous peoples and current international structures dealing with migration such as the Global Migration Group (GMG), the IASG members from agencies with an interest in the issue of indigenous peoples and migration decided to establish a migration contact group within the IASG to identify relevant ongoing work within individual agencies and to strategize on how to raise the specific issues of indigenous peoples within migration debate. The representative from the International Organization on Migration was appointed as the group's convenor.

I. Reflecting on the sixth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

30. The IASG members stand ready to assist the UNPFII members throughout the process of drafting recommendations, with the goal of supporting the drafting of recommendations that are technically accurate and within the mandate of agencies, to ensure they are given due respect and effectively acted upon. The IASG members encourage UNPFII members to

⁹ COMMON COUNTRY ASSESSMENT and UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK - Guidelines for UN Country Teams preparing a CCA and UNDAF

have on-going dialogue with IASG focal points before and during the session to achieve recommendations that are effective and can be implemented.

31. Members of the IASG, emphasized that strengthening of working methods to aid UNPFII members and agency dialogue and in particular the portfolio system is highly desirable. The portfolio system which has been adopted by the members of the UNPFII is seen as a useful mechanism for increasing communication between the IASG, the international system and the members and participants at the UNPFII sessions.

Communication and collaboration is best achieved when UNPFII members can draw fully from focused agency documents within their portfolios and engage in interactive dialogue with agencies..

32. Regional meetings of the UNPFII may assist with costs and access by indigenous peoples, as well as promoting indigenous issues within certain regions.

33. Member visits and bilateral strengthening of relationships will be beneficial for the UNPFII and is highly desirable.

34. The IASG recognizes the need to provide greater time for thematic discussions during UNPFII sessions and suggests that consideration be given to the possible submission of agency reports on a periodic basis. A periodic reporting system may help to promote a deeper and more effective dialogue, with the participation of indigenous peoples.

35. The IASG members committed ourselves to provide focused and concise reports and to encourage and contribute towards interactive and deep dialogue to advance issues relevant to indigenous peoples and the UNPFII.

J. Strengthening of working methods¹⁰, member support¹¹ and a revised terms of reference

36. Members of the IASG reviewed and revised the IASG Terms of Reference, and in doing so provided further suggestions on its wording, and approved the amendments. The updated and adopted revised Terms of Reference are contained in Annex I. Significantly, the Terms of Reference have been revised to include the term “Indigenous Peoples”, reflecting the IASG’s commitment to the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

¹⁰ Includes a discussion on strengthening the interactive dialogue of the UNPFII plenary meetings with members of the UNPFII and regionalising inter-agency cooperation on indigenous issues through UNDG;

¹¹ Includes a discussion on training needs of the new members - specifically in the areas of the mandates, policies and activities of the various agencies in the IASG;

Annex I

Terms of Reference of the United Nations Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues

(Revised and adopted 19 September 2007)

Purpose

1. The Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG) is a mechanism for international cooperation on indigenous peoples' issues in relation to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)¹², programs and mechanisms and other inter-governmental bodies' and entities on indigenous peoples' issues.

Membership of the Inter-agency Support Group

¹² The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is an advisory body of independent experts reporting to the Economic and Social Council on all matters within the mandate of the Council and was established by ECOSOC Resolution 2000/22. The General Assembly, in resolution 57/191 of 18 December 2002, entitled 'Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues', explicitly referred to the IASG and invited the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, including the IASG, other relevant international and regional organizations and bodies and indigenous people to assist the Forum in carrying out its mandate as enumerated in paragraph 2 of ECOSOC resolution 2000/22, including through the provision of staff.

2. The Inter-Agency Support Group shall be composed of focal points/units or representatives as identified by Heads of the departments or inter-governmental organizations, within the international system, whose work is relevant to indigenous peoples' and their issues.
3. Representatives should have broad knowledge and experience of the UN system and of activities concerning indigenous peoples' issues within their organizations.
4. Membership in the group implies a commitment to participate regularly, and to share information in a timely fashion to enable and facilitate coordination and cooperation.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

5. The Inter-Agency Support Group shall:
 - (i) Provide an opportunity for the focal points, units or representatives of its members to meet regularly to exchange information in relation to their work on indigenous peoples' issues;
 - (ii) Consider ways of strengthening cooperation among its members to promote the human rights and well-being of indigenous peoples through joint activities and other forms of cooperation;
 - (iii) Analyze recommendations of the UNPFII and contribute to their implementation on the basis of the mandates, resources and capacity of each organization;

- (iv) Develop relationships with governments, donors, civil society organizations (CSOs), indigenous peoples' organizations, and others to consider cooperative ways of supporting the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues;
- (v) Interact with the UNPFII and its Members to provide and seek information, advice and substantive inputs;
- (vi) Advise and assist in the mainstreaming of indigenous peoples' issues within the International system;
- (vii) Strengthen mutual support for the focal points/units or representatives in each of the agencies, organizations, programmes and entities participating in the IASG.

Methods of operation

6. The Inter-agency Support Group shall meet at least once a year for a substantive meeting, with follow-up meetings as necessary.
7. The chair of the IASG rotates through the member organizations, bodies and entities on an annual basis. The chair is responsible for the hosting, convening and facilitation of an annual IASG meeting.
8. The Secretariat of the UNPFII¹³ provides support and continuity to the chair, and Inter-Agency Support Group as required.
9. The IASG will invite members of the UNPFII as contributors to the discussions.

¹³ Recalling the mandate of the UNPFII which includes amongst other things, to “promote coordination of activities related to

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10. The IASG may invite on an ad hoc basis, experts, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other entities, whose work may contribute to the IASG's work, as observers and contributors to its discussions. These invited contributors would be able to attend such parts of the inter-agency meetings as may be decided by the IASG rotating chair, after consulting with other members of the IASG.
11. The IASG members participating in the annual IASG meeting are responsible for covering their own costs in relation to meetings.
12. The Inter-agency Support Group shall keep a record of proceedings.

indigenous issues within the UN system”.