



**August 2011**

**Tenth Session of the Permanent Forum**

**Fourth Session of the Expert Mechanism  
on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

**International Day of the World's  
Indigenous Peoples (9 August)**

**Global Preparatory Meeting of  
Indigenous Peoples on Rio +20**

**World Conference on Indigenous  
Peoples (2014)**

**Trust Fund for the Second Decade**

*The Message Stick<sup>1</sup> highlights the activities undertaken by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) as well as its Secretariat. It is produced by SPFII staff.*

**The Tenth Session of the Permanent  
Forum (16-27 May 2011)**

The tenth session of the Permanent Forum took place at UN Headquarters in New York from 16 to 27 May 2011. More than one thousand participants attended the session representing governments, indigenous organizations, UN-system agencies, NGOs and academics.

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<sup>1</sup> A Message Stick is a traditional Australian Aboriginal method of correspondence whereby runners would deliver messages carved in symbols on a piece of wood to inform other indigenous peoples of upcoming events.

The UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, opened the session and stressed that “the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples finally has the consensus it deserves. Now we need to make the Declaration’s principles a reality. To those who do not grasp the Declaration’s importance. I say: protecting and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples benefits us all.”



*Photo Credits: Broddi Sigurdarson*

**Election of members**

At its 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, on 16 May, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (The Permanent Forum) elected the following members of the Bureau by acclamation:

*Chair:* Ms Mirna Cunningham.

*Vice-Chairs:* Ms Dalee Sambo Dorough, Edward John, Ms Eva Biaudet and Mr Paul Kanyinke Sena.

*Rapporteur:* Ms Paimaneh Hasteh.



## Review year

2011 is a review year. Hence, the Permanent Forum followed up on its recommendations on economic and social development, the environment and free, prior and informed consent.

The Permanent Forum received information on the implementation of 62 of the 131 recommendations made throughout its past nine sessions in the field of *economic and social development*. The Permanent Forum upheld the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination as well as their right to determine and develop their own priorities and strategies for development, as enshrined in articles 3 and 32 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration).

The Permanent Forum congratulated the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on the adoption of its policy on indigenous and tribal peoples, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on the establishment of an indigenous peoples' forum. It welcomed the launch of the UN Indigenous Peoples' Partnership (UNIPP), and urged support for UN Development Programme's (UNDP) regional initiative on indigenous peoples' rights and development in Asia (RIPP) and the ILO programme to promote Convention No. 169 (PRO 169).

*Environmental* issues are wide-ranging and interventions encompassed on the need to respect and uphold indigenous peoples' rights to land, land use, natural resources, water, oceans, wetlands, climate change, traditional knowledge systems, forests, and access and benefit sharing, among others. The Permanent Forum reiterated that states should recognize indigenous peoples' rights to forests and should review and amend laws to better align them to the UN

Declaration and other international standards.

A large number of interventions focused on the implementation of *Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)*. The Permanent Forum emphasized that this is a crucial dimension of the right to self-determination, and recommended that States and international financial institutions monitor, evaluate, assess and report on how FPIC has, or has not been recognized and applied with respect to the lands, territories and resources of the indigenous peoples concerned. The Permanent Forum decided to explore the potential for the development of guidelines for the implementation of FPIC in collaboration with the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## Human Rights

Human Rights continues to be a major issue at each Permanent Forum session. The Permanent Forum welcomed the reports from States and UN agencies on the implementation of the UN Declaration, while at the same time drawing attention to serious implementation gaps.

The Permanent Forum held an inter-active dialogue with the participation of Prof. James Anaya, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Mr. Jose Carlos Morales, Chairperson of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Mr. Musa Ngary Bitaye, Commissioner of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, among others. Prof. Anaya stated that 'While we can celebrate the global consensus that now stands behind the Declaration its implementation remains a constant challenge that must be confronted with



concerted efforts at the national and international levels.’

Mr. Carlos Mamani, former Chairperson of the Permanent Forum presented the findings of the Permanent Forum’s mission to Colombia that took place from 5 to 9 July 2010 to look into the situation of indigenous peoples in danger of extinction and the situation of the Awa peoples in that country. The Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations, Mr. Nestor Osorio and representatives of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) also addressed this issue.

### **Half day discussion on Central and South America and the Caribbean**

A panel of experts including Ms. Dinah Shelton, Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Issues of the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights; Mr. Heraldo Muñoz, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP; Ms. Pauline Sukhai, Minister of Amerindian Affairs of Guyana; Ms Margarita Gutierrez and Mr Adolpho Chavez representing indigenous people’s organizations discussed the regional trends, priorities and challenges.

Following on from the inter-active dialogues, the Permanent Forum requested that Member States implement the precautionary measures and recommendations issued by the Inter-American Commission, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Permanent Forum, to prevent irreparable harm to indigenous peoples, their authorities and indigenous peoples’ organizations.



*Members of the UNPFII during the Tenth Session  
Photo Credits: Broddi Sigurdarson*

### **Comprehensive dialogue with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)**

The Permanent Forum has initiated the practice of dialogues with UN agencies during its sessions, to enable more in-depth discussions and to seek the advice and recommendations of the Permanent Forum. At this session, a high level delegation from UNICEF engaged in the dialogue, with officials from different regions also attending the meeting. UNICEF presented a detailed report on their programmes, followed by queries and comments from Permanent Forum members, as well as from governments and indigenous peoples’ organizations.

The Permanent Forum issued 15 recommendations to UNICEF including a recommendation that UNICEF operate and implement its strategic framework on indigenous children and report to the Permanent Forum in 2012 on measures taken to that end.

### **Half day discussion on the Right to Water**

The Permanent Forum held a panel discussion on the right to water composed of Ms. Caterina de Albuquerque, Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation; Mr Bertie Xavier, Permanent Forum member; Ms.





Aicha Chiek Salah, representing the Tidawt Organization of Niger and; HE Mr. Pablo Solon, the Bolivian Ambassador.

The Special Rapporteur stressed that she regularly receives information about threats to indigenous rights, including concerns about pollution of water sources. The Special Rapporteur also received numerous reports about the impact of mining operations –from uranium mining in the US to bauxite mining in India. She stated indigenous peoples are seeing severe impacts on their access to clean water, as well as on their lives and cultures.

The Permanent Forum urged States to recognize and protect indigenous peoples' cultural right to water and, through legislation and policy, support the right of indigenous peoples to hunt and gather food resources from waters used for cultural, economic and commercial purposes.



*Photo Credits: Broddi Sigurdarson*

### **Future work of the Forum**

The Permanent Forum held a discussion on The World Conference on Indigenous

Peoples, to be organized in 2014. Mr. Armin Ritz, Chef de Cabinet of the Office of the President of the General Assembly stressed that “From today until 2014, the Permanent Forum has a central role to play and is uniquely qualified to give input on the modalities of the Conference as well as on its outcome at a later stage”.

Regarding the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, known as Rio+20, Mr. Devasish Roy, Permanent Forum member, welcomed the conference as the prime opportunity for the world community to strengthen the role of all key segments of humanity, including indigenous peoples, in achieving sustainable development, particularly in a world threatened by climate change.

Mr. Lars Anders Baer, former member of the Permanent Forum presented his study on the status of implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord of 1997. This was followed by interventions from the Government of Bangladesh, Governments, UN Agencies and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations.

Reports were also presented on international criminal law and the judicial defence of indigenous peoples' rights; forced labour and indigenous peoples; technical review of the international regime on access and benefit-sharing and; the study on the impact of the global crisis on indigenous peoples.

The next session of the Permanent Forum will take place in New York from 7 to 18 May 2012.

*Please note that renovations are ongoing for the UN premises. This will continue to place constraints on the number of participants and side events that can take place during the session. We ask for your understanding and cooperation in advance.*

#### **Fourth Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP)**

EMRIP held its fourth session in Geneva from 11- 15 July 2011 and included its five Expert members, member States, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as Permanent Forum members Mr Edward John and for part of the meeting, Ms Valmaine Toki. SPFII staff also attended the session.

Mr Edward John gave a statement at the opening of the meeting, noting the importance of EMRIP in advocating and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples. He also highlighted the need for coordination between the three mechanisms on the rights of indigenous peoples.

The main focus of the EMRIP session was the Study on indigenous peoples and the right to participation in decision-making. There were a number of challenges raised in the study which were highlighted by many people taking the floor - such as the right to participation in decision making processes associated with public policies, participation of women in decision-making; free, prior and informed consent and the lack of infrastructure to support indigenous peoples in decision-making. In terms of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, there was discussion on the implementation of the UN Declaration; some good practices were highlighted as well constitutional endorsement of specific rights by some member States. However, most agreed the challenge remains in implementing the UN Declaration.

#### **International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples**



*Photo Credits: S. Chakma*

On 9 August 2011, the 17th International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was commemorated at UN Headquarters in New York.

The event was organized by the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in close cooperation with the UN Department of Public Information and the NGO Committee on the Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Around 100 people attended the event.

The UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, in his message, "[E]ncouraged all Member States to take concrete steps to address the challenges facing indigenous peoples – including marginalization, extreme poverty, and loss of lands, territories and resources. Countries should also commit to ending the grave human rights abuses that indigenous peoples encounter in many parts of the world".

The President of the General Assembly H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss, emphasized the need to support indigenous peoples in their struggle to protect their rights to their art, culture and identity and ensure that this is part of environmental sustainability and social responsibility.



The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Mr. Sha Zukang, in his role as Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, known as Rio+20 stressed that the Conference is a tremendous opportunity for indigenous peoples to share their wisdom with all, and that in its preparation special efforts should be made to include indigenous peoples, who are the most vulnerable and marginalized of all.

The Chairperson of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Ms Mirna Cunningham, expressed that in many indigenous communities there is a risk of losing their textile tradition. However, there are also good practices that are important to highlight. Around the world, companies have been founded with the mission of forming a scalable artesian network that reflects a commitment to development with culture and identity, sustainability and socially responsible actions. In this regard indigenous peoples have to be fully and effectively involved and they have to be granted the right to express their free, prior and informed consent on any activity or relationship that impacts on their lives and future.

The documentary entitled “Craft Kalimantan- Harmony of culture and nature” was screened for the audience. It was followed by a panel discussion on “Indigenous designs: celebrating stories and cultures, crafting our own future” where the discussions focused on the cultural and intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples.

### **World Conference on Indigenous Peoples**

In a historic decision, on 12 November 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to organize a high-level plenary

meeting - to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples - in 2014 (Resolution A/C.3/65/L22/Rev.1).

The aim will be to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, as well as pursuing the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The President of the General Assembly will conduct open-ended consultations with Member States and with indigenous peoples’ representatives in the framework of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as well as with the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur in order to determine the modalities for the meeting including indigenous peoples’ participation at the Conference.

### **Global Preparatory Meeting of Indigenous Peoples on Rio +20**

The meeting was held in Manaus, Brazil from 22 to 24 August 2011.

Permanent Forum members Ms Myrna Cunningham, Mr Paul Kanyinke Sena, Mr Bertie Xavier, Mr Raja Devasish Roy, Mr Álvaro Esteban Pop, Mr Saul Vicente Vásquez and SPFII staff attended a meeting.

The objective of the meeting was to consider positions for indigenous peoples to participate in the process towards Rio +20; to develop on-going strategies, taking into account the local, regional and global contexts of the indigenous peoples’ agenda, in relation to the progress and challenges of Rio +20; to create joint positions and proposals addressing specific issues to be discussed at the Rio+20 including issues of fundamental importance to indigenous





peoples; to contribute to the development of concepts on sustainable development that takes into account the notion of development with culture and identity that responds to indigenous peoples and their societies and; through knowledge and life experiences contribute towards enriching the economic outlook of sustainable development.

### **Trust Fund for the Second Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples**

The Trust Fund for the Second Decade on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People was established in 2004 to promote, support and implement the objectives of the Decade (2005-2015).

It supports projects focusing on the Programme of Action of the Second Decade and the UN Declaration under the broad mandated areas of the Permanent Forum: culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development.

In response to the sixth call for projects for the Trust Fund (2010-2011), approximately

684 organizations from all over the world submitted 709 proposals. The Advisory Group for the Fund met in May 2011 to review the proposals, and approved a number of grants.

Please see below for the successful organizations which will be receiving grants in the 2011 cycle.

***Kindly note that the Advisory Group has identified additional projects which will receive grants if and when funds become available during 2011.***



*Photo Credits: Broddi Sigurdarson*

A new cycle is in place for 2011-2012. The deadline is 1 September 2011.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Name of project</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Belize	Building capacity and increasing opportunity for cacao and coffee growing families in southern Belize	Ya'axché Conservation Trust
Canada	Best Practices in Intergenerational Language Transmission	Anishinaabek, Mushkegowuk, Onkwehonwe Language Commission of Ontario
Canada	Treaty 8 Indigenous Games	Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta
Congo	Programme d'Appui aux Pygmées et de lutte contre le VIH/Sida au village Vungba	AFIA SANTE
Malaysia	Mapping of traditional land territory of the Penan tribe in Long Jaik village in Belaga District, Sarawak, Malaysia	Institut Pribumi Malaysia Sarawak
Russian Federation	Suicide among indigenous people of Siberia: catastrophe, causes and prevention	Buryatia State University



Samoa	This is My Village: Enabling the Voices of Pasifika	Pasifika Foundation Hawai'i (PFH) in partnership with Pasifika Media Association (PasiMA)
Tanzania	Climate change education to Maasai communities in Kilosa district Morogoro, Tanzania	Tanzania Youth Environmental Network (TAYEN)
Venezuela	Fortalecer el papel cultural de la mujer indígena en la promoción y conservación del idioma Baniwa en el estado Amazonas-Venezuela.	Asociación de Pueblos Indígenas de Venezuela (APIVEN)
Vietnam	Empowering Muong women and girls affected by domestic violence in Thanh Hoi commune of Tan Lac District, Hoa Binh Province in Vietnam	Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender, Family, Women and Adolescents (CSAGA)

The Permanent Forum will make decisions on projects in December 2011 in order to expedite the selection process. This way, the time between the presentation of a proposal and the actual selection of the grantees will be shortened significantly. The Advisory Group has decided that organizations can now apply for a total of 20,000 US\$ if the project has a regional character; for national projects the amount granted will still be 10,000 US\$.

against the unauthorized use of any personal information you might have provided as a result of the scam.

### **Fraud alert**

A fraudulent e-mail has been sent from an e-mail address of the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. This was a scam that referred to “awards funds” or a “lottery” and requested personal information.

The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum does not charge any fee for submission of project proposals or for attendance at any of its meetings.

The United Nations does not charge any recruitment fee in relation to job applications.

The United Nations is not involved with any issue concerning lotteries or inheritance.

If you are a victim of such a fraud, please take all appropriate measures to protect

