



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES INDIGENOUS VOICES

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNITED NATIONS FORUM TO SEEK FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Impact of industrial corporations on indigenous peoples also on the agenda

(New York, 14 May 2009) The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) will meet in at UN Headquarters in New York from 18 to 29 May to discuss ways to further implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which gained momentum last month when Australia officially endorsed the Declaration after previously having voted against it.

Some 2,000 indigenous representatives from all regions of the world are expected to participate in the eighth session of the Forum, as well as State representatives, civil society, academia, some 35 UN system bodies and other inter-governmental organizations.

The Forum will also discuss the relationship between indigenous peoples and industrial corporations, and the need to promote corporate social responsibility. A report submitted to the Forum notes that extractive industries, such as mineral, oil and gas extraction, disproportionately impact indigenous peoples. Other issues on the Forum's agenda include climate change, the Arctic region and land tenure.

Towards implementation of the Indigenous Declaration

After more than two decades of negotiations, the UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. This landmark document recognizes the rights of the world's nearly 400 million indigenous peoples as human rights and outlaws discrimination against them, emphasizing the rights of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions.

"Now that it's adopted, the biggest challenge is how to get the Declaration implemented by states, UN bodies and by indigenous peoples themselves and by society at large," said Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Focus on the Arctic

On Thursday 21 May, the Forum will hold a half-day discussion on the situation of indigenous peoples in the Arctic, including the impact of climate change in the region. Panelists at the discussion will include the Honourable Louis Tapardjuk, a minister of the Government of the Territory of Nunavut in Canada.





Permanent Forum

The Permanent Forum was established by the UN Economic and Social Council in 2000, with a mandate to "discuss indigenous issues within the mandate of the Council relating to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights."

The Forum is composed of 16 independent experts, functioning in their personal capacities. Eight of the members are nominated by governments and eight directly by indigenous organizations in their regions.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

- ❖ **A press conference** with Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and other indigenous representatives, will be held on Monday, 18 May at 1.30p.m. at UN Headquarters, Room S-226.
- ❖ **For interviews with UN officials and indigenous leaders**, please contact: François Coutu, Department of Public Information, tel: 917-367-8052, email: coutu@un.org or Charlotte Scaddan, Department of Public Information, tel: 917-367-9378, email: scaddan@un.org
- ❖ **For Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues**, please contact: Broddi Sigurdarson, Secretariat of UNPFII, tel: 917-367-2106, email: IndigenousPermanentForum@un.org
- ❖ **For more information on the Eighth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**, including documents and details of more than 60 side events, please see: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_eighth.html
- ❖ **For the full text of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**, please see: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/declaration.html>
- ❖ **For the more information on the UN System's work on climate change**, please see: <http://www.un.org/climatechange/index.shtml>

