



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES INDIGENOUS VOICES

PRESS RELEASE

## UN General Assembly sets the stage for 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

UNITED NATIONS, 18 September 2012 -- The United Nations General Assembly yesterday adopted a draft resolution on the organization of a high-level plenary meeting of its sixty-ninth session, to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (resolution A/66/L.61).

By the terms of the resolution, the Assembly decided that the event would be held on 22-23 September 2014 in New York. The Assembly encouraged the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples around the world. It also requested the President of the General Assembly to organize, no later than June 2014, an informal interactive hearing to provide inputs for the preparatory process. In addition, the three UN mechanisms related to indigenous peoples' rights are invited to provide valuable input to the preparatory process.


"The World Conference on Indigenous peoples presents a unique opportunity to ensure greater and more inclusive participation of indigenous peoples in decisions which affect them. Indigenous peoples need to be involved, heard and their issues addressed for real and transformative changes to happen. As well, the World Conference is an opportunity to bring to light the historical and current challenges facing indigenous peoples" said Grand Chief Ed John, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The main objectives of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples are to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples and to pursue the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The outcome document will be action-oriented and will pursue the realization of the rights enshrined in the UN Declaration.

A number of speakers welcomed the establishment of the World Conference and stressed the important role of the Assembly in protecting and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples.



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The representative of Cyprus, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said the text allowed Member States and indigenous peoples to work together closely throughout the preparatory process. However, he expressed regret that the text did not contain the principle of full inclusion of civil society groups. The representative of the United States agreed, noting also that the text did not define a specific process by which indigenous peoples' groups would be accredited. That issue would require further consideration, she added.

The representative of the Russian Federation stressed nonetheless that nothing in the resolution should be construed as annulling or modifying the rules of the General Assembly itself.

Meanwhile, the representative of Sweden announced that his Government had decided to contribute \$100,000 to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Indigenous Populations, and encouraged other Governments to consider doing the same.

**Resolution A/66/L.61:**

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/WCIP-GA66-res.pdf>

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**For more information** on the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, please see: <http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples.aspx>

