

UNITED NATIONS



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## **SECRETARIAT OF THE PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES**

### **Side Event at the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Poro Alegre, Brazil 7-10 March, 2006**

**Title of the Event:** “Indigenous Peoples and their right to land, territories and resources: Synergies and Tensions with Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.”

**Date of the Event:** 8 March, 2006

**Background:** The International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) will review different experiences of agrarian reform and rural development processes around the world by analyzing impacts, processes, mechanisms and the actors involved in order to develop proposals for future action. There are 27 years since the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development took place and given the importance of access to land and resources, it is of vital importance that indigenous issues are made visible at the event.

Five main themes will be discussed at ICARRD:

- Policies and practises for securing and improving access to land and promoting agrarian reform
- Building local capacities to improve access to land, water, agricultural inputs and agrarian services to promote rural development and a sustainable management of natural resources
- New opportunities to strengthen rural producers and communities
- Agrarian reform, social justice and sustainable development
- Food sovereignty and access to resources

ICARRD will produce two concrete results:

- A lasting Platform of understanding, learning and dialogue on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development supported by an International Observatory Panel

- A range of best policies and practices and lessons learned on Agrarian Reform and rural development to promote priority actions, partnerships and international cooperation.

**Description of the Event:** The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum will organize a panel and dialogue during the ICARRD. The panel will be composed indigenous experts, a representative from a Member State, a representative from a UN agency and will be chaired by the chairperson of the Permanent Forum. The event and dialogue will be open for participation by Member States representatives, NGOs, the UN system, academia and the media. The purpose is to raise awareness of the specific challenges faced by indigenous peoples in relation to agrarian reform and rural development. The Secretariat is organizing the event in cooperation with FAO.

The panel will discuss the overriding themes of ICARRD with a specific focus on indigenous peoples, bearing in mind the importance of maintaining a gender perspective at all times.

The following issues will be included in the discussion:

- Policies and practises for securing and improving respect for indigenous peoples' rights to lands, territories and resources.
- Identifying tensions and synergies between agrarian reform policies and programs and recognition and implementation of indigenous peoples' rights to their lands, territories and resources and suggesting recommendations on how to resolve conflicts and reinforce synergies.
- Enhancing indigenous peoples' capacities to assert their rights to lands and resources and to effectively participate in designing and implementing more appropriate agricultural and rural development services, including the reinforcement of their indigenous natural resource management practices.
- Food sovereignty and enhancing indigenous peoples' access and customary use of their natural resources.

The Panel will include participants from Africa, Asia, Central America and South America.

**Aim of the Event and Follow-up:** The event aims at raising awareness among the numerous participants at ICARRD, including Member States, UN Agencies, Indigenous Peoples' NGOs, International Financial Institutions, academics and the media on the positive and negative experiences of indigenous peoples relating to agrarian reform and rural development policies, programs and projects and how these reinforce or undermine the respect and promotion of the right of indigenous peoples to their lands, territories and resources and their right to self-determination, which includes their right to determine their economic, social and cultural development paths.

In addition raising awareness of indigenous issues, the event is aimed at informing and influencing the discussions and exchanges of experiences at ICARRD with the end in view of influencing the final outcomes of the conference. The event will also inform the

discussions of the Forum and enhance its capacity for making concrete recommendations to the UN system. The event and its outcomes will be widely publicized by the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum through its website and network.

The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum will present a note on the Panel discussion and its recommendations to the fifth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May 2006.

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In addition to this concept note, the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will issue compilation UNPFII recommendations related to land rights from previous Forum Sessions and the relevant articles of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.