



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.: GENERAL  
\_\_\_ 2006

Original: ENGLISH

---

**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

**Fifth session**

New York, 15-26 May 2006

Agenda item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Ongoing priorities and themes**

**Information received from the United Nations system**

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

**Summary**

The United Nations Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) makes substantive recommendations which are of particular relevance to the work of various divisions within the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs such as data related work, women and sustainable development. Equally, these divisions and branches have increasingly been taking into consideration indigenous issues in their respective work. The substantive progress and achievements in these areas in 2005 are contained in the present report.

## **Contents**

- I. Contribution from the Statistics Division .....
- II. Contribution from the Division for the Advancement of Women.....
- III. Contribution from the Division for Sustainable Development .....

## **I. Contribution from the Statistics Division to the fifth Session of the UNPFII**

### **A&B. Response to recommendations under the Permanent Forum's Mandate**

1. The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, collects data on national and/or ethnic group, language and religion from population and housing censuses, and has done so for more than 50 years, using standardised questionnaires sent to national statistical offices (NSOs). The collected data are processed and disseminated by the UNSD through the Demographic Yearbook (DYB) system. The DYB system is designed to collect, compile and disseminate official national demographic and social statistics at the international level. The data is disseminated through print publications such as the annual Demographic Yearbook, the Internet and through CD ROM on special topics.
2. Up until 2005, data on ethnocultural characteristics had not been published since 1993. By the end of 2005, UNSD published data on national and/or ethnic group on our website. Work is under way to review data on language and religion by mid 2006.
3. One of the major activities of the Demographic and Social Statistics Branch of the Statistics Division has been the coordination of the drafting of *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses revision 1*. In August 2005 a United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses was held to lay down the modalities for updating and revising the existing *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*. One of the areas to be updated and reviewed is ethnicity taking into account relevant issues pertaining to indigenous people. The experts are drafting the revised section having consulted the Report of the Fourth Session of the UNPFII.

4. Some of the key issues being taken into consideration in the revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* include the importance of national context, the process nature of ethnic identification, the importance self- identification, the potential for statistics to contribute to the measurement of the well-being of indigenous people.

5. UNSD is currently reviewing national practices in the collection and dissemination of statistics on ethnocultural characteristics. The focus of the study is to review the types of data being collected and disseminated by different countries, and the types of international activities occurring in support of improved data collection and methodologies. In addition the report on national practices will cover current issues related to the collection and dissemination of ethnocultural statistics.

6. Another development has been a website to disseminate data on ethnocultural characteristics and other information relevant to statistics on indigenous people. This website is currently online and is being continually improved and updated with the support of the UNFPII. The website also provides links to relevant data available on national statistical offices' websites. UNSD developed a census metadata database which contains questions included in country questionnaires during the 2000 round of Population and Housing Censuses (1995-2004). UNSD has developed web interfaces for the databases and expect to make them available online in the near future. The relevant website is:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/popchar/default.htm>

## **C. Obstacles to implementation of recommendations of the Permanent Forum, or other policies relevant to indigenous people**

7. The Division is supportive of the recommendations of the UNFPII relevant to statistical work. The main obstacle has been the heavy workload of staff specifically the staff time requirements dedicated to the Flagship publication the *World's Women 2005: Progress in Statistics*.

## **II. Contribution from the Division for the Advancement of Women**

### **A. Response to recommendations addressed exclusively to the particular Department/division under one or more items of the Permanent Forum's mandate.**

8. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women continues to review the situation of indigenous women in reporting States in a systematic manner. During the 33<sup>rd</sup> session, 5-22 July 2005, the issue of indigenous women was raised by the Committee in the constructive dialogue and in the concluding comments of those States parties that have indigenous peoples amongst their population (i.e. third, fourth, fifth and sixth combined report of Guyana, CEDAW/C/GUY/CO/3-6).

9. The Commission on the Status of Women, (CSW) primarily in its work on follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the 23<sup>rd</sup> special session of the General Assembly, continues to address the situation of indigenous women. In March 2005, during its 49<sup>th</sup> session the CSW, adopted resolution 49/7 on Indigenous women: beyond the ten-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The issue of indigenous women was also highlighted in resolution 49/2, Eliminating demand for trafficked women and

girls for all forms of exploitation, and in the panel discussions: “Addressing the linkages between the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration: progress, gaps and challenge”; and “Future perspectives on the promotion of gender equality: through the eyes of young women and men”. Further information about the resolutions and summaries of the panel discussions are contained in document E/2005/27.

10. The situation of indigenous women was covered as part of the 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action. The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), in collaboration with the regional commissions, compiled information from Governments on major achievements and obstacles in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly through questionnaires. Part Two of the questionnaire, “Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the further initiatives and actions identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly”, requested Governments to include information on indigenous women.

11. Twenty four Governments provided information on indigenous women, specifically on Government’s measures, actions and policies aimed at improving the status of indigenous women and on the obstacles and challenges to eliminate their discrimination and social and economic exclusion. The Secretary-General’s report contains a section summarizing these efforts (document E/CN.6/2005/2).

12. Sixty indigenous women from around the world attended the 49<sup>th</sup> session of CSW. Their participation in the session was very active and productive; including participation to 8 side events, 2 press conferences and a one week seminar on the UN system.

13. DAW participates and contributes to the IANWGE Task Force on Indigenous Women. The Division attended the meeting held in April 2005 aimed at fulfilling the medium term objectives of the Task Force, i.e. to identify successful interventions/good examples of UN work on indigenous women's issues with emphasis on MDGs.

14. DAW contributes to the Inter Departmental Task Force on Indigenous Issues. It participated in the meeting held in September 2005 where the follow up actions to the fourth session and preparation of the fifth session the Permanent Forum, among other topics, were discussed. In addition, DAW provided comments to the draft provisional framework for DESA technical cooperation.

15. sAs part of its preparation of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on violence against women, the Division has set up a Task Force to facilitate inputs. The International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI), associated with MADRE, an international human rights organization focusing on women's rights, is an active member of the Task Force and facilitates the channeling of information on the particular challenges and vulnerabilities indigenous women face. The Division invited NGOs to submit inputs highlighting key issues and recommendations that should be considered as well as examples of good practices in addressing violence against women, and hosted an online discussion to facilitate inputs and feedback from as wide

a range of stakeholders as possible. NGOs including FIMI and CUSO (Canada) contributed to both, noting the specific concerns of indigenous women.

### **III. Contribution from the Major Groups Programme/Division for Sustainable Development/DESA**

16. Broad public participation in implementation is an essential prerequisite of sustainable development. Indigenous people are one of the nine major groups sectors recognised by Agenda 21 as essential partners in the advancement of sustainable development.

17. Since the creation of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in 1992, major groups have been given important roles to play as partners in sustainable development. The CSD meetings have provided innovative spaces for the participation of non-governmental actors with the overall purpose of informing the Commission's decision-making processes.

18. In preparing for the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the CSD (1-12 May 2006), which will focus on evaluating progress in implementing Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in relation to *Energy for Sustainable Development; Industrial Development; Air pollution/ Atmosphere; and Climate Change*, indigenous people organisations have been invited to contribute as follows:

- Submit inputs to the Secretary-General Reports;
- Participate in the Regional Implementation Meetings and contribute to the regional review of challenges and obstacles in the implementation of CSD-14 thematic clusters;

- Prepare a discussion paper, through the coordination of a “steering group” of indigenous organisations serving as organising partners (including Tebtebba - Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education and Indigenous Environmental Network, for more information see [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/mgroups/mg\\_op](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/mgroups/mg_op) ). The discussion paper will represent the main indigenous people’s written input to CSD (availed in all UN official languages). The discussion paper reports on indigenous people’s results oriented activities in the thematic cluster (available at: [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/docs\\_csd14.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/docs_csd14.htm) ).
- Participate in the activities of CSD-14 including:
  - A dedicated Major Groups’ multi-stakeholder dialogue session;
  - A Ministerial dialogue session with Major Groups;
  - Participation in Thematic and Regional discussions, the SIDS day, the Partnerships Fair, and the Learning Centre;
  - Closing remarks on how Major Groups will initiate action in implementation in relation to the thematic cluster of issues

19. The Division for Sustainable Development avails limited funding to indigenous people and other major groups participants to enable their participation in CSD meetings. Concurrently, in 2005 the Division for Sustainable Development collaborated with Indigenous groups and other major groups’ sectors, to ensure their involvement, contribution and participation in the preparatory process leading to the Mauritius International Meeting on the Sustainable Development of Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) held in Mauritius on 10-14 January 2005.

20. SIDS indigenous people participated in thematic discussions and in a high level roundtable, and contributed to the activities of the Partnership Fair and to the various

side events organized during the Meeting. The Division has been able sponsor the participation of about twenty major groups' representatives, including several indigenous representatives.