



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, INDIGENOUS VOICES

PRESS RELEASE

Activists to celebrate International Day of the World's Indigenous People on 9 August at the UN

Living with dignity, human rights and meaningful development to be highlighted; Indigenous Hollywood actress to take part

New York, 7 August – The International Day of the World's Indigenous People will be celebrated around the world on 9 August. At United Nations Headquarters, core issues and concerns of indigenous peoples will take centre stage in day-long events in New York.

Along with an art exhibition by Kichwa artist Inty Muenala from Ecuador and a film screening, a panel discussion on “Indigenous Peoples: human rights, dignity and development with identity” will be held. Speakers include **Q'orianka Kilcher**, lead actress in the 2005 Hollywood film, *The New World*. The young actress is a descendant of the Huachipaeri and Quechua people of Peru and will speak about her recent trip to the country. Phrang Roy, Assistant President, International Fund for Agricultural Development; Wilton Littlechild (Cree Nation-Canada), Member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; and Romy Tincopa, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Peru to the UN will also speak at the event.


Messages by Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, Jos_ Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Coordinator of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, and Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will be delivered at the event.

This year's observance coincides with a number of landmark events for indigenous peoples around the world. A significant achievement has been the recent adoption of the United Nations **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** in June this year at the inaugural session of the newly elected Human Rights Council. Indigenous peoples are looking forward to the final adoption of the Declaration by the General Assembly before the end of 2006. Advocates believe that the Declaration, once adopted by Member States, will serve as a crucial international instrument to protect and ensure indigenous rights. Celebrations and discussions this year will also draw upon the theme of “Partnership for Action and Dignity”, the central focus of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, which runs from 2005 to 2015.

Estimates point to more than 370 million indigenous peoples in some 70 countries worldwide. While they are from diverse geographical and cultural backgrounds, they share common difficulties which include lack of basic healthcare, limited access to education, loss of control over land, abject poverty, displacement, human rights violations, and economic and social marginalization.



United Nations



Another issue of concern for indigenous communities, that of development, is also likely to be discussed this week. Experts say development programmes often ignore the needs of these communities and their traditional knowledge. For development programmes, including the Millennium Development Goals, to truly have an impact on indigenous peoples, their participation in decisions that affect their lives and their visions of development need to be incorporated effectively into national plans.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous People is commemorated each year on 9 August in recognition of the first meeting of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva in 1982. This year's observance at the UN is being organized by the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; and the NGO Committee on the Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

For more information of the Day's events, please visit
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/news_internationalday2006.html

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