

June 2014



*The Message Stick<sup>1</sup> highlights the activities undertaken by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) as well as its Secretariat.*

### **Thirteenth Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (12-23 May 2014) – Special Theme: Good Governance**



Photo: Broddi Sigurdarson

The thirteenth session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues took place at UN Headquarters from 12 to 23 May 2014.

The two-week session was **attended by over 1200 participants** with a large number of representatives of Member States, including high-level officials, UN agencies, funds and programmes, indigenous peoples delegates and NGOs. There were also a significant number of indigenous women and youth, and indigenous persons with disabilities.

Providing an excellent opportunity for sharing good practices, networking and delving into specific topics, **more than 60 side events were held during the session.** They were organized by indigenous peoples' organizations, NGOs, Member States and UN entities covering a wide range of topics

including on indigenous women and development, sexual health and reproductive rights, cultural rights, right to indigenous lands, territories and resources, the post-2015 development agenda and regional and national issues.

This year's **special theme was on principles of good governance** consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). In addition, the Forum focused during its 2014 session on (i) the situation of indigenous peoples in the Asian region, (ii) the work of UN agencies, funds and programmes related to indigenous peoples issues, (iii) indigenous children and youth, (iv) the Second Decade of the World's



*The UN Secretary-General addressing the opening of the thirteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues with UNPFII Chair, Dalee Sambo Dorough. Photo: Broddi Sigurdarson*

<sup>1</sup> A Message Stick is a traditional Australian Aboriginal method of correspondence whereby runners would deliver messages carved in symbols on a piece of wood.



Indigenous Peoples (2005-2014), (v) indigenous peoples' inclusion in the post-2015 development agenda, and (vi) the future work of the Permanent Forum, including emerging issues.



Members Ms. Maria Eugenia Choque (front right) and Mr. Alvaro Pop (back right) discussing with participants at the thirteenth Permanent Forum Session. Photo: Broddi Sigurdarson

A segment of the Forum was dedicated to human rights where participants spoke on the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and had the opportunity to address the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Several reports and studies undertaken by Permanent Forum members were presented highlighting issues related to, inter alia, sexual health and reproductive rights (report of the SPFII-organized expert group meeting in January 2014 - E/C.19/2014/8), a study on an optional protocol to the UNDRIP (E/C.19/2014/7), best practices and examples in respect of resolving land disputes and land claims (E/C.19/2014/4), the situation of indigenous children in Latin America and the Caribbean (E/C.19/2014/5), and on challenges in the African region to protecting traditional knowledge, genetic resources and folklore (E/C.19/2014/2).

The preparations for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (September 2014) were also discussed. On 19 May 2014, the Focal Point of the President of the General Assembly on the World Conference,

Ambassador Crispin Gregoire, presented a new formula on how to proceed with the preparations for the World Conference.

The official documents submitted to the session are available at [www.un.org/indigenous](http://www.un.org/indigenous) and via Papersmart: <http://papersmart.unmeetings.org/en/ecosoc/unpfii/thirteenth-session/statements/>.

A collection of the statements made during the session is available online via doCip at <http://bit.ly/doCip13thsession>.

### **First Consultation on the 2014 High-Level Plenary Meeting (World Conference on Indigenous Peoples)**

The President of the General Assembly convened on 3 June 2014 the first consultation on the outcome document of the WCIP. The purpose was to receive substantive inputs from Member States and indigenous representatives for the preparation of a zero draft outcome document which he will prepare with the assistance of his four advisers: the Permanent Representatives of Costa Rica and Slovenia and two indigenous representatives, Mr. Les Malezer and Dr. Mirna Cunningham.



Dr. Mirna Cunningham and Mr. Les Malezer at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples. Photo: Broddi Sigurdarson



### *Zero draft outcome document*

Numerous speakers representing Member States and indigenous peoples emphasized the importance and usefulness of using the Alta outcome document as the basis of the World Conference outcome document given its status as a consensus document that was agreed by the world's indigenous peoples in Alta, Norway, in June 2013 (A/67/994).

The four themes emerging from the Alta document are the following:

- Indigenous Peoples' lands, territories, resources, oceans and waters
- UN system action for the implementation of the rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Implementation of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Indigenous Peoples' priorities for Development with free, prior and informed consent.

Many speakers emphasized that the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides the normative framework. Some speakers made reference to other documents that indigenous peoples have agreed on in their preparations for the World Conference, including regional outcome documents as well as the 2013 Lima Declaration of the World Conference of Indigenous Women.



*Ms. Florina Lopez addressing the informal consultation*  
Photo: United Nations Webcast

Other themes that were raised during the hearing included: access to justice; the role of the UN system, specifically on reviewing and enhancing the mandates and composition of existing UN mechanisms that deals with indigenous peoples issues. Also raised was the possibility of increasing the level of indigenous peoples representatives' engagement with the UN system through, inter alia, establishing a new high-level position within the UN to focus on indigenous peoples (Under-Secretary-General/Special Envoy); granting indigenous peoples permanent UN observer status or creating a category that recognizes their distinct identity as nations and peoples.

The Chairperson of the Permanent Forum, Ms. Dalee Sambo Dorough, and Permanent Forum member Grand Chief Ed John participated at the meeting.

Statements from the consultations are available at: <https://papersmart.unmeetings.org/en/ga/68th-session/informal-on-the-outcome-of-the-hl-meeting-indigenous-peoples/statements/>. The webcast of the meeting can be found at: <http://webtv.un.org/watch/part-1-outcome-of-the-world-conference-on-indigenous-peoples-general-assembly-informal-consultations/3604025755001/>.

### **Informal Inter-active Hearing on the 2014 High-Level Plenary Meeting (World Conference on Indigenous Peoples)**

On 17 and 18 June 2014, the President of the General Assembly organized an informal inter-active hearing for indigenous peoples, Member States, the UN system and others as per the modalities resolution (A/RES/66/296).

The main objective of the hearing was to provide an opportunity for Member States to

provide inputs for a zero draft of the outcome document.

The discussions were centred on three overall topics: (i) implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples; (ii) indigenous peoples' lands, territories, resources, oceans and waters; and (iii) indigenous priorities for sustainable development.

The hearing was attended by some 200 indigenous peoples representatives, 30 UN agencies and 70 Member States representatives. The Permanent Forum chairperson, Ms Dalee Sambo Dorough, and member, Professor Megan Davis attended. Permanent Forum member Ms. Joan Carling also attended representing the Indigenous Global Coordinating Group (GCG).

Additional consultations will be held on 16 July 2014 and on 18 August 2014 to enable Member States and indigenous peoples to share their views on the zero draft. On the basis of these views, and with the assistance of the four advisers, a revised draft document will serve as the basis for moving forward with further consultations.

More information, including the concept note and link to the webcast, is available at <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/68/events/wcip.shtml>.

## **Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum was established by the UN General Assembly in 2002.

It is based at UN Headquarters in New York in the Division for Social Policy and Development of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSPD/DESA).

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