

May 2013



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Review Year**

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**Ninth European Regional Meeting of the
International Labour Organization**

**Indigenous Women at the 57th Session of
the Commission on the Status of Women**

*The Message Stick¹ highlights the activities
undertaken by the United Nations Permanent
Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) as
well as its Secretariat. It is produced by
SPFII staff.*

¹ A Message Stick is a traditional Australian
Aboriginal method of correspondence whereby
runners would deliver messages carved in symbols on
a piece of wood to inform other indigenous peoples of
upcoming events.

**Twelfth Session of the Permanent Forum
on Indigenous Issues (20 – 31 May 2013) –
Review Year**



The twelfth session of the Permanent Forum
(20 – 31 May 2013) will be especially
significant, since this is a review year with
emphasis on the implementation of the
Permanent Forum recommendations on:
health, education and culture.

Participation

A large number of participants are expected
for this session from States, the UN system
and other intergovernmental organizations
and indigenous peoples' organizations
(IPOs), NGOs and academia. Please visit the
twelfth session page on the Permanent
Forum's website for more information:
[http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/
UNPFIISessions/Twelfth.aspx](http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/UNPFIISessions/Twelfth.aspx).



Human rights

The human rights part of the session includes discussions on the:

- implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and the
- dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In terms of the dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, there is a request that speakers make interventions directed at the Special Rapporteur.

In-depth dialogue with International Financial Institutions

As part of the Forum's method of work, this year will include a comprehensive in-depth dialogue with a number of international financial institutions. These will include:

- World Bank;
- Asian Development Bank;
- African Development Bank;
- Inter-American Development Bank; and
- International Finance Corporation.

This dialogue is also for indigenous peoples to ask questions on the work and activities of the international financial institutions.

Regional focus: Africa

The regional focus this year will be on Africa with a plenary panel of Permanent Forum Members, indigenous peoples' organizations, States and UN agencies making presentations.

World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (2014)

Discussions will also address the preparations for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, to be held in September 2014, and the ongoing definition of a post-2015 development agenda to succeed the

current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Discussion on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

There will be panel discussion around the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and how indigenous peoples are being included in this Agenda.

Outreach and side events

Numerous side events will take place throughout the session. They are organized by indigenous peoples' organizations, Member States, UN entities, other intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, the Permanent Forum Secretariat and others. Most events will take place at lunch time, evenings and during the closed meetings of the Permanent Forum. The schedule of side events is available here:

<http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/UNPFIIISessions/Twelfth/SideEvents.aspx>.

As in previous years, a cultural event with performances by indigenous artists followed by reception will take place in the evening of Tuesday, 21 May 2013.

Due to the on-going renovations of the UN lobby, the indigenous exhibit will not take place this year.

Several press conferences are scheduled throughout the session. Accredited indigenous media who wish to attend these must advise the Permanent Forum Secretariat prior to the event.

Interviews with UN Radio in various languages will be conducted with Permanent Forum Members and other participants throughout the two weeks.

Logistics at UN Headquarters

The opening of the twelfth session is scheduled to take place in the General



Assembly Hall while the meetings afterwards are to be held the newly renovated Trusteeship Council Chamber in the Secretariat Building.

Making statements

In addition to the Forum Members, governments, agencies, indigenous peoples' organizations and NGOs with ECOSOC Status are allowed to make statements. The times for these speeches are usually left to the discretion of the chair, but generally do not exceed 5 minutes. When IPOs and NGOs take the floor, priority is given to caucus statements and joint statements.

Pre-Sessional Meeting of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: First Ever Held in Africa



Permanent Forum members, Government officials of the Republic of Congo and Secretariat staff in Brazzaville (Republic of Congo).

In preparation for its twelfth session (20 – 31 May 2013), the Permanent Forum Members and its Secretariat met in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, from 11 to 15 March 2013. Hosted by the Government of the Republic of Congo and opened with a statement from the President, H.E. Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, delivered by the State Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, the meeting provided an opportunity for Permanent Forum Members to meet with

parliamentarians, the UN Country Team and indigenous peoples.

In addition to the preparations for the upcoming session, the Forum Members highlighted the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (September 2014) as an opportunity to define a global action plan to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. They encouraged the Republic of Congo to be engaged in this process.

During their consultations with indigenous peoples, Forum Members were informed on continuing problems of discrimination and marginalization. Indigenous peoples described the problems they face in accessing schools and finding employment. Indigenous women spoke of the lack of maternal- and childcare, and difficulties encountered while giving birth in forests.

At meetings with parliamentarians, and with government officials, including the Minister of Forests, the Forum Members offered different suggestions on how to overcome the persistent challenges faced by indigenous peoples in the region. The Members also met with UN agencies and other partners who provided information on various projects and programmes developed within the framework of the national action plan on the improvement of the quality of life of indigenous peoples.

On the occasion of the meeting, the UNPFII Chair noted that "*the Republic of Congo had taken a key step in adopting Law No 5-2011 on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Populations. (The Republic of Congo) is a leader in Africa on indigenous peoples' rights. We hope other countries will be inspired to follow this good practice.*" The key challenge now is to implement the law, he added.



World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (2014) – Preparatory Processes

The General Assembly (GA) decided (A/RES/65/198) to organize a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly in 2014, to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. The main objective is to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples and to pursue the objectives of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In preparation for this event, the GA Resolution 65/198 invites the President of the General Assembly to conduct open-ended consultations with Member States and with representatives of indigenous peoples within the framework of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as well as the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in order to determine the modalities for the meeting, including for the participation of indigenous peoples in the Conference.

The three UN entities specific to indigenous peoples – UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – have also initiated discussions on the World Conference in line with resolution 65/198.

Indigenous peoples around the world have since been organizing themselves to engage in this process. One of the main outcomes was an open-ended Indigenous Peoples' Brainstorming Meeting on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples 2014 (Copenhagen, 2012) which resulted in the establishment of an Indigenous Global

Coordinating Group (GCG). This is composed by representatives from the seven indigenous-identified social and cultural regions of the world as well as the indigenous youth caucus and the indigenous women's caucus.

During its 66th Session, the General Assembly decided that the World Conference would be held on 22 and 23 September 2014 in New York at UN Headquarters. The resolution from that Session deals with organizational matters such as the provisions of round-tables and panel discussions in addition to the participation modalities of indigenous peoples and their representatives. It is available at:

www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/RES/66/296

Meetings and Declarations from the seven socio-cultural regions and the caucuses

Indigenous peoples around the world are holding regional preparatory meetings to produce outcome documents on their views, strategies and recommendations to the process. Meetings and Declarations from the seven socio-cultural regions and the caucuses are available at:

<http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/WorldConference/IndigenousPeoplesVoicesontheworldconference.aspx>

To learn more about the indigenous peoples' preparations, please also visit www.wcip2014.org.

Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Youth

In late January 2013, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues organized a meeting entitled “Indigenous youth: identity, challenges and hope: articles 14, 17, 21 and 25 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”. The meeting





Steven Brown, Tania Pariona Tarqui, Matuna Niwamanya, Andrea Landry, Igor Yando, Meenakshi Munda, Tuomas Aslak Juuso

was attended by over fifty representatives from indigenous organizations, NGOs, Member States, the UN system and four Members of the Permanent Forum, including Mr. Alvaro Pop, who chaired the meeting. Many of the participants were indigenous youth themselves, including all seven regional experts who made presentations on the state of indigenous youth across the globe. They also prepared the report of the meeting in cooperation with the four Forum Members.

The Permanent Forum has since its establishment made youth a priority. At its first session, the Forum stated that it “...intends to make indigenous children and youth a focal point of its work in the years to come.” Since making this clear statement, the Forum has made many more recommendations to the UN system and Member States on indigenous children than on youth. Recognizing this imbalance, the Forum decided to organize this Expert Group Meeting.

The discussions at the event delved into issues on indigenous youth and language; culture and identity; education and employment; and participation in decision-making.

The meeting resulted in a number of recommendations to the UN system as well as to Member States, indigenous peoples and the Permanent Forum. The recommendations covered a range of issues including on improved and appropriate education for indigenous youth, strengthening of indigenous languages, cultures and educational institutions, addressing youth suicide and ensuring the participation of indigenous youth in decision-making that affects their well-being.

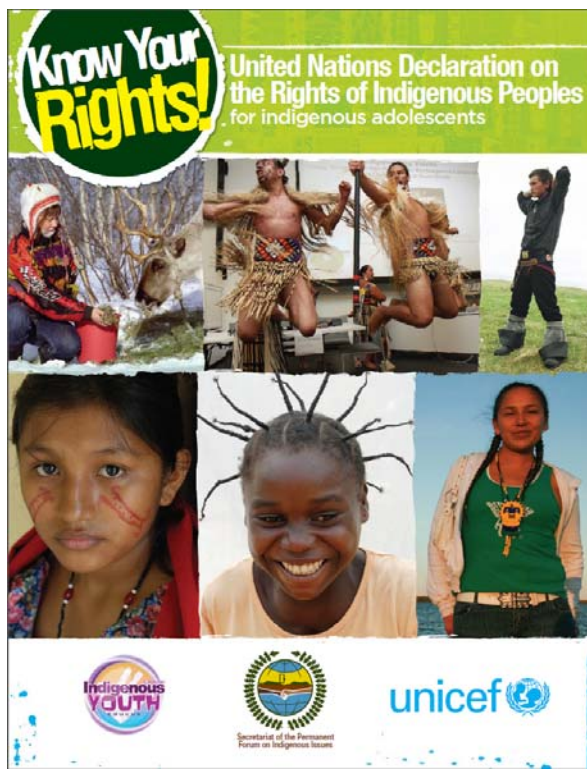


The recommendations are contained in the report of the meeting that is an official document of the twelfth session of the Permanent Forum. It is available in all six official UN languages:

www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=E/C.19/2013/3



Adolescent-Friendly Version of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples



To assist indigenous adolescents to become knowledgeable on issues important to them and to support their active participation in decision-making processes to secure their rights, UNICEF has – in collaboration with the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Indigenous Youth Caucus – developed an adolescent-friendly version of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that targets those aged between 13 and 18.

The adoption of UNDRIP in 2007 was the result and highlight of many years of work. For indigenous peoples – numbering more than 370 million in some 90 countries around the world, the Declaration is an expression of their rights and place in the global community. It is therefore important that

young indigenous people become acquainted with its provisions.

Written for a global adolescent audience, this version of the UNDRIP also provides background information on the international indigenous rights movement and the importance of the Declaration and summarizes its articles to highlight key points.

The document is available for download at: www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/files/H_RBAP_UN_Rights_Indig_Peoples.pdf.

International Expert Seminar on Access to Justice for Indigenous Peoples including Truth and Reconciliation Processes

The Chair and Members of the Permanent Forum participated from 27 February to 1 March 2013 in an International Expert Seminar on Access to Justice for Indigenous Peoples including truth and reconciliation processes. The event was organized by the Institute for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Centre for Transitional Justice. The primary objective of the Expert Seminar was to contribute to the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' study on this topic. Panellists and participants devoted time to consider not only issues of access to justice, truth and reconciliation for indigenous peoples but also necessary focal points and recommendatory themes and topics for the Study of the Expert Mechanism on the matter. Columbia University will prepare a publication which will include the presentations of the participants.



First Global Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD



Mirna Cunningham Kain and Raja Devasish Roy at the IFAD Forum.

To strengthen the International Fund for Agricultural Development's (IFAD) engagement with indigenous peoples, and as a follow up on a recommendation of the Permanent Forum to establish mechanisms for dialogue and partnership between UN agencies and indigenous peoples, IFAD has established an Indigenous Peoples' Forum. The first meeting of this forum was held from 11 to 13 February 2013, in conjunction with the 36th session of IFAD's Governing Council – its highest decision-making body.

The deliberations of indigenous peoples were presented to the IFAD Governing Council as a road map to implement its own policy of engagement, and to systematically engage indigenous peoples at the local, national and international levels through a process of dialogue and consultation between representatives of indigenous peoples, IFAD staff and Member States. IFAD President, Mr. Kanayo Nwanze, extended a warm welcome to the Indigenous Peoples' Forum and committed IFAD support in implementing its recommendations. This is significant in highlighting the engagement of IFAD at its highest level to indigenous peoples' rights.

Members of the Permanent Forum have worked in close partnership with IFAD in the process leading to the Forum, with technical and substantive support from the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum. Members of the Permanent Forum are part of the steering committee of IFAD's Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility, in addition to being on the IFAD Forum (three Members).

The full synthesis report is available at www.ifad.org/english/indigenous/forum/synthesis.htm.

First Historic Forum on Indigenous Peoples Held by the African Development Bank

On 11 and 12 February 2013, Permanent Forum Member, Mr. Kanyinke Paul Sena, attended the first Forum on Indigenous Peoples' Development Issues in Africa, hosted by the African Development Bank (AfDB) in Tunis, Tunisia. The objective of the Forum was to bring together indigenous peoples and other relevant stakeholders to discuss ways to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples in development decision-making in Africa. The Bank is currently updating its safeguard policies and developing its Integrated Safeguards System (ISS). While the Bank decided to mainstream indigenous peoples' concerns into its overall operational safeguards, representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations urged the Bank to place more consideration on their issues, including developing a standalone safeguard policy on indigenous peoples. The Forum, therefore, had been developed to create the space for indigenous peoples and other stakeholders to share their experiences with the Bank and to set the tone for the Bank's future engagement with indigenous peoples to ensure that they benefit from economic growth, with a view to enhancing

their full participation in development as well as improving their livelihoods by ensuring the flow of development benefits into their communities. In his intervention, Mr. Sena highlighted that the Bank should formulate a policy of partnership with indigenous peoples, based on the recognition and implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Africa, to provide guidance in its programming at the local, national and regional levels. He underlined the importance of establishing a mechanism to ensure meaningful participation and partnership with indigenous peoples, for example through a forum of consultation operating according to the principle of free, prior and informed consent. He also called the Bank to support the full recognition of customary land and resource rights of indigenous peoples, underpinned by the right of free, prior informed consent with particular reference to development projects that may directly or indirectly affect them; to support the entrepreneurship of indigenous peoples and especially of indigenous women; and to facilitate and support sharing and networking of indigenous peoples as part of AfDB's outreach and capacity development activities. More information is available at: www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/article/forum-on-indigenous-peoples-development-issues-in-africa-10271/

Ninth European Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organization

From 8 to 11 April 2013, Grand Chief Ed John, Chair of the Permanent Forum, participated in the Ninth European Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The meeting provided an opportunity for tri-partite representatives of 51 countries of the European and Central Asian region to share their experiences and to discuss responses to the economic and employment crises in the region, looking at

levels of social protection, social dialogue and the application of labour law.

Grand Chief Edward John emphasized during the meeting that there is a continuing demand of indigenous peoples to directly engage with ILO and its supervisory and programmatic bodies. He called on States not to leave out indigenous peoples in the on-going necessary social dialogue in the midst of the serious economic and financial crises.

He urged and recommended that ILO and its partners take concrete measures in the implementation of its policies and programmes – with particular reference to employment generation activities and social protection – to ensure indigenous peoples are included as a specific target group.

A special focus was given in his presentation to the situation of indigenous children and youth. In this regard, he recommended that ILO supports and helps secure opportunities for indigenous youth and children to learn about their identities and their cultural heritage. He also recommended that ILO and its partners incorporate indigenous youth in its programmes and activities, including in the implementation of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Youth.

Indigenous Women at the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women



The 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was held at UN Headquarters from 4 to 15 March 2013. A major success at this session was the adoption of agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. This result was obtained not only from the continuous negotiations of States but also from the persistent work of the more than 600 NGOs gathered at the United Nations, including indigenous women from around the world. In this regard, *“The Commission reaffirms that indigenous women often suffer multiple forms of discrimination and poverty which increase their vulnerability to all forms of violence; and stresses the need to seriously address violence against indigenous women and girls.”* The agreed conclusions from CSW57 are available at:

www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2013/L.5.

About 30 indigenous women from different parts of the world participated in the session. Particular focus was given indigenous women at a press conference organized by the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) and the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum in cooperation with the Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas (FIMI); and at side events, including on “Indigenous Women’s Watch Against Violence” organized by FIMI; “Indigenous women building their autonomy for the eradication of violence and a life with dignity” organized by FIMI and co-sponsored by UNICEF and SPFII. Also, a reception in honour of indigenous women was hosted by the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations.

Signed by more than twenty organizations, a “Declaration of The Indigenous Women of

CSW57” was adopted. The Declaration focuses on indigenous women and issues such as their participation in political processes, education, the environment and access to justice. The full document is available in Spanish and English here: <http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/CrossThematicIssues/IndigenousWomen.aspx>.

Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum was established by the 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).

The Secretariat is now located in the Secretariat Building, Room S-2954

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