

April 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 Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples will take place from 12 to 23 May 2014 at UN Headquarters. This year the overall theme for the session will be on ‘principles of good governance consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: articles 3 to 6 and 46’.

#### *Participation*

A large number of participants are expected for this session from States, indigenous peoples’ organizations, the UN system and other intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and academia.

#### *Human rights*

The human rights part of the session will include:

- discussions on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and
- a dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) and other human rights mechanisms.

#### *Regional focus: Asia*

The regional focus this year will be on Asia. The purpose of this discussion is for Permanent Forum members, indigenous peoples’ organizations, States and UN agencies to discuss specific issues related to indigenous peoples in the Asian region.

#### *World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (2014)*

Discussions will cover the preparations for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly in 2014, to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, which is slated for September 2014.

#### *Discussion on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*

A segment of the session will focus on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and on how indigenous peoples are being included in the process and the final outcomes.

<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 to inform other indigenous peoples of upcoming events.



### *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. The schedule of side events will be made available at [www.un.org/indigenous](http://www.un.org/indigenous).

A cultural event with performances by indigenous artists followed by a reception will take place on the evening of Tuesday, 13 May 2014.

Several press conferences are being organized throughout the session. Accredited indigenous media who wish to attend these are advised to inform 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 over the course of the two weeks.

### *Making statements*

States, governments, agencies, indigenous peoples' organizations and NGOs with ECOSOC status are invited to take the floor during the meetings. The time allotments for these statements are usually left to the discretion of the chair, but generally do not exceed five minutes. When IPOs and NGOs take the floor, priority is given to caucus statements and joint statements.

For more information, including on participation, the programme of work and reports submitted for consideration by the Forum, please visit: <http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/UN/PFIISessions/Thirteenth/HowtoParticipate.aspx>.

### **Pre-Sessional Meeting of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (Mexico)**



*The Permanent Forum members gathered at the pre-sessional meeting in Mexico City. Photo: Mirian Masaquiza*

The Permanent Forum members met for a pre-sessional meeting in Mexico City at the invitation of the Government of Mexico from 26 to 28 March 2014. This meeting constituted a crucial element in the preparatory process for the upcoming session and allowed the Forum members to discuss the details of the forthcoming session, and take into account relevant developments since their last meeting in May 2013. This year was particularly significant as it was the first meeting for nine new members.

In addition to the session preparations, the meeting provided an opportunity for the members to discuss issues related to the mandate of the Permanent Forum and its relation to ECOSOC, as well as for SPFII to provide an overview of its work throughout the year.

Forum members also met with indigenous peoples' representatives, government officials, parliamentarians and the UN country team in Mexico. Discussions at these meetings covered issues such as concerns by indigenous peoples in the region over current consultation procedures with governments, violence against indigenous peoples and the slow progress of implementing commitments.

## Indigenous Expert Group Meeting on Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights



*Ms. Larisa Abryutina, Mr. Clive Aspin, Ms. Mirna Cunningham and Ms. Jessica Danforth, expert participants at the expert group meeting on indigenous peoples' sexual health and reproductive rights. Photo: Broddi Sigurdarson*

In January 2014, the Permanent Forum organized an expert group meeting on sexual health and reproductive rights at UN Headquarters in New York.

Attended by six regional experts and representatives of indigenous peoples organizations, governments and UN agencies, the participants discussed how international human rights standards and policies could be more responsive to advancing sexual health and reproductive rights for indigenous peoples.

The conclusions and recommendations of the meeting called for an increased emphasis on the provision of intercultural healthcare that responds to, and engages with indigenous peoples' notions of health and illness, traditional medicinal knowledge and practices as well as conceptual framework that links their biological, spiritual and emotional lives.

The meeting was also an opportunity to exchange information, analysis and good practices. The final report and recommendations of the expert group meeting will be submitted to the thirteenth session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May 2014.

The report of the meeting is available at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2014/8.pdf>.

## Indigenous Women at the fifty-eighth Commission on the Status on Women (10-21 March 2014)

This year, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) focused on (i) the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, (ii) access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, and (iii) women's access to productive resources.



*Indigenous women participating in the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status on Women. Photo: Mariana Lopez*

Indigenous women participated at various levels throughout the meetings. The Permanent Forum Secretariat organized – with the UN Department of Public Information – a press conference on indigenous women in the post-2015 development agenda on 13 March 2014. Speakers at the press conference presented indigenous women's priority issues for the post-2015 development agenda process, as identified at the Global Conference of Indigenous Women held in Peru in October 2013. Speakers also voiced their position with respect to on-going discussions at the current CSW session, and in relation to the forthcoming Beijing +20 review process, the International Conference on Population and Development in 2014 and the World Conference on the World's Indigenous Peoples 2014.

During the CSW session, the Permanent Forum Secretariat was involved in several

activities, including a training session for indigenous women and a side event on 'indigenous women challenging the future they want: Millennium Development Goals and the Post 2015 Development Agenda'.

