



# MESSAGE STICK

## United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Quarterly Newsletter

Prepared by the United Nations Secretariat for the Permanent  
Forum on Indigenous Issues  
Division for Social Policy and Development, DESA, United Nations

Vol.2. No.1. January to March 2004

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#### Introduction

This newsletter highlights the activities undertaken by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and its Secretariat for the period from January to March 2004.

In this newsletter you will find information regarding the *Workshop on Data Collection and Disaggregation for Indigenous Peoples*, held 19 to 21 January 2004, in which the importance of collecting disaggregated data for indigenous people was highlighted, and where some of the obstacles for collecting and analyzing data on indigenous peoples were described.

You will also find information about the Panel discussion organized by the UNSPFII and held on 10 March 2004 on the topic of “*The role of indigenous women in conflict prevention and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building*”. The issue of conflict is a permanent one on the United Nations’ agenda, as conflicts are constantly taking place all around the world. But while the world's eyes have been focused on the Middle East, conflicts that affect indigenous peoples in Africa, Asia and Latin America have

escalated. These conflict areas are inhabited by indigenous peoples and indigenous women are caught directly in the crossfire. The role of indigenous women in such conflicts was discussed at the panel. Indigenous women do not see themselves as passive victims and silent observers of conflict, or helpless victims of war. In war-torn societies, it is often the women who keep societies going. Through the Manila Declaration on the International Conference on Conflict Resolution, Peace Building, Sustainable Development and Indigenous Peoples (December 2000), indigenous peoples have emphasized that Indigenous women must be integrated to seek positions at all levels of decision-making to restore the right of indigenous women to make choices about their lives and their families in times of war and of peace. This topic is highly interlinked with the special theme of the UNPFII’s upcoming Third Session to be held in New York 10 to 21 May 2004, which is “Indigenous Women”.

Other UNSPFII activities undertaken during this first quarter of the year are the launching of the art competition for indigenous children and inputs to several reports. Members of the Permanent Forum participated in several meetings of significance for the Forum’s mandate. We hope you find the contents of this MESSAGE STICK of interest.

*The UNSPFII*



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#### January

During January, the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues prepared and provided inputs to the Secretary-General's Report on "*Genetic Privacy and Non-discrimination*" regarding the needs to avoid biopiracy and ensure the respect for indigenous cultural and intellectual heritage, as well as the establishment of mechanisms for the repatriation and devolution of genetic materials collections to indigenous peoples.

The UNSPFII also provided substantive input into the UN-Habitat report on Indigenous Housing, which will be presented to the Third Session of the UNPFII. The report is available on the UNPFII's webpage at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/pfii/documents/documents%20third%20session.htm> (see under "Information and documents received from the United Nations system and other inter-governmental organizations").

#### Workshop on Data Collection and Disaggregation for Indigenous People

From 19 to 21 January 2004, a Workshop took place on Data collection and Disaggregation for Indigenous People. The Workshop was organized by the UNSPFII in accordance with decision 2003/300 of the Economic and Social Council, following a recommendation of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its Second Session. The Workshop was attended by 36 experts from the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, governments, indigenous organizations and academics. The Workshop discussed a number

of case studies and examined challenges and made recommendations regarding data collection and disaggregation concerning indigenous people. The recommendations, which appear in Part D of the report, suggest better data collection and disaggregation concerning indigenous peoples for the consideration of the Permanent Forum at its Third Session. To access the documents from the Workshop, please visit our website at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/pfii/documents/documents%20datacollection.htm>

The United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI Outreach Programme) launched a commercial video on Indigenous Youth and Identity on commercial television (Showtime) at 7:30 pm on 25 January 2004. The video is a 30 minutes documentary that looks at common indigenous youth issues using a case study of two Aboriginal brothers from the Mornington Island of Australia.

During the month of January, Mr. Magga, Chairman of the UNPFII, and Mr. Kouevi, Member of the UNPFII, attended the Expert Conference in preparation for the Third Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues organized by the Mainyoto Pastoralist Integrated Development Organization (MPIDO) and held in Nairobi, Kenya, 29 and 30 of January.

#### February

On 5 February, the UNSPFII participated in the DPI/NGO briefing entitled "*Indigenous Women: Standing strong in a landscape of*



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risk”. Panelists at the event were: H.E. Jarmo Sareva, Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations, Ms Mirian Masaquiza, staff member of the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and Ms. Joana Big Feather, Former Director of the Institute of the American Indian Arts Museum in Santa Fe, California.

During this month, Mr. Tamang, Member and Vice-Chair of the UNPFII, attended the Conference of Parties (COP7) to Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Seventh Conference of Parties was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 9 to 20 February 2004, and its agenda included the following priority issues: Mountain Biodiversity, Protected Areas, Technology Transfer and Technical Cooperation, and Follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. They also discussed other issues, such as Access and Benefit Sharing, and Article 8(J). Mr. Tamang made a General Statement.

Prior to COP7, Indigenous Peoples organized a two days International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) in Sabah, Malaysia, held on 6 and 7 February 2004. After discussing the ways the major issues debated at the Conference of Parties related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, IIFB formed eleven working groups on different thematic areas. The different working groups presented statements on all selected issues.

UNSPFII participated at the Inter Agency Network on Gender and Women’s Equality and placed the item of Indigenous Women on

the Agenda of the 2005 Session of the IANWGE.

#### [Indigenous child and youth art competition for the design of a logo for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#)

The month of February was the month in which the UNSPFII, in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Public Information, launched the “*Indigenous child and youth art competition for the design of a logo for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*”, directed to indigenous children and youth. The Competition intends to promote further knowledge of the UNPFII and the role of the United Nations among indigenous children and youth. Indigenous girls, boys and youth all around the globe are invited to participate in this art competition. The winner design will be presented to the Forum at its fourth session, in 2005. To access the complete information about the art competition, please visit our website at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/pfii/news.htm>

#### [March](#)

#### [Panel discussion on “The role of indigenous women in conflict management, conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building”](#)

Indigenous organizations, including the Indigenous Women’s Caucus, have drawn attention to the plight of indigenous communities caught in conflict and the special situation and contributions of indigenous women. Such conflict situations have a major



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impact on the human development of indigenous communities. A major part of the mandate of the Permanent Forum is to integrate indigenous issues in intergovernmental policies through its recommendations to the UN system, the participation of its members at significant meetings of intergovernmental bodies as well as initiatives that raise awareness that will lead to policy creation and implementation.

The 48<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place in New York from 1 to 12 of March, 2004. The Commission had two special themes: “The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality”, and “Women’s equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building”. Within the context of the latter, the UNSPFII arranged a side event on *“The role of indigenous women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building”*. This event was held on 10 March 2004. The panel was composed of Ms. Njuma Ekundanayo, Vice-Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Mr. Michel Duclos, Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Ms. Stella Tamang, Chair of International Indigenous Women Caucus, Ms. Carmen Jerez, Director of Educational Network of Ambayata and Mr. Danilo Turk, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Ms. Njuma was unable to attend and her speech was delivered by UNSPFII.

To access the statements presented by these panelists, please visit our website on the following address:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/pfii/documents/panelindigandconflict.htm>

The event was open for participation by Member States representatives, NGOs, the UN system, academia and the media.

During the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, the UNSPFII kept an outreach table, with information about the activities of the Permanent Forum, which was quite popular.

Also during the month of March, the UNSPFII attended a two day multistakeholder dialogue in preparation for the 2004 ECOSOC High-level segment on *“Resources Mobilization and Enabling Environment for Poverty Eradication in the Context of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010”*.

Ms. Nicolaisen, Member of the UNPFII, attended the WIPO meeting *“Intergovernmental committee on intellectual property and genetic resources”* that took place in Geneva on 17 March. Ms. Nicolaisen’s intervention at the committee received a very positive response. She also had a chance to speak with WIPO about further cooperation between the PF and WIPO.

Ms. Trask, Member and Vice-Chair of the UNPFII, attended the Regional Consultations on the UNPFII that were held from 14 to 19



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March in Nausori, Fiji. Mr. Turpo, Member of the UNPFII, invited by the University of Michigan, attended the “*Symposium on indigenous claims in international courts*”, held on the 26 March in Michigan, USA. Mr. Kouevi, invited by the Welsh Assembly Government, attended the Conference on sustainable Development that took place in Cardiff, Wales, from 22 to 25 March.

The Chairman of the UNPFII, Mr. Ole Henrik Magga, was invited and contributed a message to UNDP’s 2004 Human Development Report, which is devoted to cultural diversity. The report will appear in June.

Following UNSPFII initiatives, the United Nations Development Group added indigenous issues and their operationalization to its 2005 priorities, thus initiating a process of policy steps for the years to come.

And finally, March was also the month during which the UNSPFII launched its on-line Newsletter, “MESSAGE STICK”. Numbers 1 and 2 of Volume 1 and Number 1 of Volume 2 (this current edition) of MESSAGE STICK are already available on-line and NGOs, IPOs, the Academia and other friends of the Forum have been alerted about its launching. To access the public version of MESSAGE STICK, please visit our website at:  
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/pfii/documents/newsletter.htm>. We hope MESSAGE STICK is a useful tool to let you know about the activities of the UNPFII and we look forward to publishing many more issues of it.

#### Upcoming events

These events, related to indigenous issues will take place during the next quarter:

From 8 to 15 April 2004, the Sixtieth Session of the Commission on Human Rights will take place in Geneva, Switzerland. Among the events of the Session, a lunchtime panel to evaluate achievements and challenges of the Decade will be held, with the participation of indigenous peoples, NGOs, States, the Special Rapporteur and Chairpersons of the WGIP and Voluntary Funds.

9 May is the inauguration of the Universal Forum of Cultures. During 141 days, the Forum will allow visitors to experience cultures and entertainment from all around the world, through large and small scale exhibitions, workshops, markets, gatherings, eateries and shops and more. The Universal Forum of Cultures will take place in Barcelona, Spain. For more information visit:  
<http://www.barcelona2004.org/eng/>

The Third Session of the UNPFII will be held from 10 to 21 May, 2004 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. You will find all the information regarding this event in the UNPFII’s website:  
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/pfii/>

The World Forum for Human Rights will take place in Nantes, France, from 16 to 19 May 2004. This event is organized by UNESCO, and it brings together all categories of actors in the field of human rights on equal basis, in



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order to allow extensive exchange of knowledge, ideas and experiences on how to address today's most pressing challenges, including terrorism, discrimination and poverty, the three main themes of the Forum. For more information, please go to: [http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php@URL\\_ID=3981&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php@URL_ID=3981&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

And finally, two important celebration in the next quarter: the celebration of the International day of Biodiversity, 22 May 2004, and the celebration of the World Environment Day, 5 June 2004. To access more information about them, please visit the following websites:

<http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/default.aspx?dur=upcoming&ord=sbjt>

[http://www.unep.org/wed/2004/About\\_WED\\_2004/index.asp](http://www.unep.org/wed/2004/About_WED_2004/index.asp)