



## 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

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Welcome to the **MESSAGE STICK**<sup>1</sup>, the newsletter that highlights the activities undertaken by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) and its Secretariat for the period from October to December 2004.

UNPFII members participated in various international meetings invited by different UN Agencies, Inter-Governmental organizations and indigenous organization such as the OHCHR, WIPO, the Commission on Human Rights, UNPFII, and IADB and they attended meetings in Ecuador, Costa Rica and Russia invited by indigenous organizations.

Special pages on our website were created on issues as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the preparation for WSIS Phase II.

Also, Inter-Agency cooperation has been increasing, in particular on indigenous women issues.

The General Assembly proclaimed the Second International Decade on the World's Indigenous People, commencing on 1 January 2005. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs is the Coordinator for the Second Decade.

During this third quarter of the year the Secretariat of the UNPFII launched a Distinguished Lecture Series on Indigenous Issues, which was opened by Prof. Stavenhagen.

We hope that you will find this edition of the Message Stick informative and useful. We look forward to receiving your feedback and may be reached at the following address for comments, questions, and suggestions:

[indigenouspermanentforum@un.org](mailto:indigenouspermanentforum@un.org)

*Secretariat of the UNPFII*

<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.

## **Indigenous Peoples and Millennium Development Goals**

### **Side event on the MDG Campaign during the Expert Meeting on Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge and the Implementation of Related International Commitments, San Jose Costa Rica, 7 December**

The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (SPFII) and the Millennium Campaign Office decided to cooperate in order to inform indigenous peoples about the Millennium Campaign, an initiative of the United Nations that encourages citizens around the world to hold their governments to account for their promises in the Millennium Declaration and Goals.

The SPFII organized a side event during the Indigenous Preparatory Meeting on Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge in Costa Rica. The side event was entitled "*Indigenous Peoples and Millennium Development Goals*" and the speakers were Ms. Patricia Garce, from Social Watch Uruguay / Millennium Campaign, and Mr. Parshuram Tamang, Member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Ms. Mirian Masaquiza from the Secretariat of the UNPFII also attended this meeting. Important points were highlighted during the debate including:

- Indigenous Peoples should approach regional and national civil society organizations with the purpose to strength their common determination to accomplish the MDGs and eradicate poverty.
- Indigenous Peoples should actively participate in the Millennium Campaign, which will be launched during the World Social Forum in January 26 to 31, 2005 in Porto Alegre, Brazil where indigenous

peoples from all around the world will participate.

- Indigenous peoples should participate in the drafting of the country reports regarding MDGs.
- The Secretariat of the UNPFII should disseminate information about country Millennium Campaigns on their web site.

The Secretariat of the UNPFII opened a special page on its website on the MDGs and the MDG Campaign, please see:

[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/news/MDGs/MDGs\\_IPO\\_campaign1.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/news/MDGs/MDGs_IPO_campaign1.htm)

### **Representation of the UNPFII at important meetings of relevance to its mandate**

#### **Participation of Mr. Jacanamijoy at the Indigenous Advisory Council of indigenous specialists and leaders at the IADB, Washington DC.**

The Inter-American Development Bank is in a consultation process for the *Strategic Framework for Indigenous Development and the Operational Policy for Indigenous People*.

Mr. Antonio Jacanamijoy participated in the Advisory Council; two meetings have been scheduled for December 6-8, 2004 and February 15 - 17, 2005 in Washington DC to discuss the documents, which will allow for better use of Bank resources, the strengthening of an open dialogue between governments and indigenous actors and a better orientation of national and regional policies in support of development with identity and the protection of collective and individual rights of indigenous peoples.

To read the *Strategic Framework for Indigenous Development and the operational Policy for the Indigenous People*, please visit [http://www.iadb.org/sds/IND/site\\_401\\_e.htm](http://www.iadb.org/sds/IND/site_401_e.htm)

**Participation of Mr. Kouevi at the Seminar on Education and Indigenous Peoples, organized by OHCHR in partnership with UNESCO, 18-20 October, Paris**

An Expert seminar on Indigenous Peoples and Education took place at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, from 18 to 20 October. Mr. Kouevi participated on behalf of the UNPFII. The Seminar was organized by UNESCO and OHCHR to support the work of Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, whose report to the 2005 session of the Commission on Human Rights focuses on this theme. To read the report please visit [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?m=73](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?m=73)

**Participation of Mr. Matias at the meeting “International Cooperation and Indigenous Peoples”, 25 – 27 October, Quito Ecuador**

Mr. Marcos Matias, attended the meeting organized by the indigenous regional organizations as Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA), Consejo Indígena de Centro América (CICA) and Fondo Indígena. Representatives from different intergovernmental institutions, funds and cooperation programmes attended the meeting, such as the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Ecuador, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), IBIS (Denmark), International Weiterbildung und Entwicklung GmbH, Oxfam America, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Spain Agency of International Cooperation (AECI), Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IHR) among others.

The principal agencies that cooperate with indigenous peoples in Latin America

presented their level of cooperation for the development of indigenous peoples during the first International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, which ended in December 2004. Many indigenous leaders from the Americas also attended the meeting.

**Participation of Ms. Nicolaisen at the meeting on Traditional Knowledge, Folklore, Genetic Resources, WIPO, Geneva 1 to 5 November.**

Ms. Nicolaisen, attended the meeting and she pointed out the Forum's willingness in providing expert input to the work of WIPO on intellectual property, traditional knowledge and folklore, on such issues as how customary and indigenous laws and protocols could be recognized and applied within national, regional and international systems for the protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. Also, she highlighted that WIPO representatives attended the Third Session of the UNPFII where they had the opportunity to hear directly from indigenous peoples, their concerns and also to receive advice on how to build a better relationship and increased cooperation between WIPO and indigenous peoples. WIPO is also an active member of the Inter Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues.

**Working Group on the Commission on Human Rights on the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, 29 Nov.-3 Dec.**

The United Nations draft declaration has been under consideration by the above mentioned Working Group since 1995. The draft contains 45 articles and includes references to management of land and resources as well as to self-government and the relationship between States and Indigenous Peoples. Two negotiating sessions for the U.N. Working Group on the

Draft Declaration took place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 13 – 24 September 2004 and 6 meetings from 29 November - 3 December 2004. No articles were adopted at these two sessions –past sessions have resulted in the adoption of only 2 of the 45 articles.

Members of the UNPFII attended the working group sessions (Ms. Trask, Mr. Littlechild, Mr. Magga). To read the report of the Working Group, please visit <http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/docs/crp3-rev.doc>

### **Expert Meeting on Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge and the Implementation of Related International Commitments, San Jose, Costa Rica, 6-10 December**

During the Expert Meeting on Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge organized by the United Nations Forum on Forest and the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest, Mr. Tamang on behalf of the UNPFII participated in the high level panel, where he highlighted how indigenous peoples are contributing to sustainable forest management and protection.

During the event a series of case studies were presented looking at the extent to which national governments have met their international commitments towards promotion and protection of traditional forest related knowledge. After the presentation of case studies from each region, the indigenous experts and other participants met in four regional working groups, where each region prepared recommendations to the UNFF, CBD, UNPFII and other relevant UN Agencies, Governments, NGOs and Indigenous Peoples Organizations. To read the Corobici Declaration and the full set of recommendations produced during the meeting visit

[http://www.international-alliance.org/tfrk\\_expert\\_meeting.htm](http://www.international-alliance.org/tfrk_expert_meeting.htm)

### **Participation of Mr. Magga and Ms. Strogalschikova at the International Conference "The Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Russian and the World Contexts", Petrozavodsk, Russia 9-10 December 2004.**

Mr. Ole Henrik Magga, Chairperson of the UNPFII and Ms. Zinaida Strogalschikova Member of the UNPFII took part in the Conference; the Chief of the Secretariat of the UNPFII Ms. Elsa Stamatopoulou forwarded her welcoming message to the organizers and participants of the Conference.

The major goal of the Conference was to discuss the results of the UN International Decade, the influence of this important action of the UN on the solution of the burning issues and problems faced by indigenous peoples in such areas as human rights, education, culture, the environment and health at the international, regional and national (Russian) levels, and to prepare the recommendations which, in the opinion of the participants of the Conference, may promote further progress in the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The problems and perspectives of the co-operation of indigenous peoples of various countries at the regional level were also the subject of discussion at the Conference. Democratic changes in Russia at the turn of 1980s and 1990s contributed to the achievement of the major goal of the first Decade – the strengthening of the international co-operation in solving the problems of indigenous peoples.

The Conference was sponsored by the Russian Federal Agency of Culture and Cinematography, the Consultative

Committee of the Finno-Ugric Peoples, and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

### **Inter-Agency Cooperation**

#### **Results of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues held in New York.**

The Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues (IASG) composed of UN departments, agencies, funds and programmes and other inter-governmental organizations, was established to support and promote the mandate of the UNPFII within the United Nations system. At its meetings on 30 September and 1 October 2004 in New York, the IASG on Indigenous Issues focused on Indigenous Peoples and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) considered that indigenous and tribal peoples have the right to benefit from the MDGs, and from other goals and aspirations contained in the Millennium Declaration to the same extent as all others. The UNPFII has strategically decided to devote the special theme of its 2005 session to *Indigenous Peoples and the MDGs*. Four Members of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues were also present at the meeting of the IASG, namely Mr. Yuri Boychenko, Mr. Wilton Littlechild, Ms. Ida Nicolaisen and Mr. Parshuram Tamang. Please find the statement of the IASG at [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/links\\_unsystem/inter\\_agency\\_statement.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/links_unsystem/inter_agency_statement.htm)

#### **Cooperation of the Secretariat of the UNPFII with the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses of Nicaragua and the UNDP country office regarding the upcoming census in the country**

For the first time in the history of the Nicaragua national censuses, Cartographic Updating was conducted in matters of population, ethnic group, and economic characteristics of the Caribbean Coast of the country, where most of the indigenous population of the country resides. The

cartographers were indigenous of the Caribbean Coast and during the process they were seeking information from community leaders regard education, social and economic matters and the level of infrastructure of each community. Given the importance of this information for the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean Coast, and due to the fact that the data will permit a precise diagnosis of the demographic and economic situation of the region, the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) and the UNDP country office with the support of the Secretariat of the UNPFII have developed a series of workshops to disseminate and validate the data with all the social actors of the Caribbean Coast community.

#### **Cooperation with the Statistics Division (DESA)**

The Secretariat of the UNPFII in cooperation with the Statistics Division (DESA) are conducting a survey with the purpose of developing a website to disseminate data on nationality/ethnic group, language and religion with focus on indigenous peoples.

The Secretariat of the UNPFII reviewed the existing data in national censuses analyzing the way in which ethnic groups are already being measured by Member States. We have compiled a list of countries with information as to whether and how they have measured indigenous peoples. Also, we have reviewed and compiled the relevant footnotes and census questionnaires with specific indigenous questions from the censuses of the last decade.

The Secretariat of the UNPFII began and will continue to use these compilations to answer the following questions:

- Are countries with indigenous persons counting those persons in their censuses?
- How are countries measuring their indigenous peoples in censuses? Who are explicitly excluded? What are the

limitations of existing data? What conclusions can we draw from the findings of this report?

- The major part of the project is expected to be completed in May 2005 to be presented at the Fourth Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

### **DESA Intradepartmental Task Force on Indigenous Issues, November 3 and December 9.**

DESA Intradepartmental Task Force on Indigenous Issues held two meetings, on November 3<sup>rd</sup> with the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) and the other on December 9<sup>th</sup> with the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD). SPFII exploring in what ways indigenous issues could be included in the current programs in which the colleagues from the mentioned divisions are involved. So far, in cooperation with DPADM, SPFII is formulating a project concerning indigenous peoples and governance.

### **Indigenous Women's Issues**

#### **Preparations by the Secretariat of the UNPFII for the 10-year review of Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action on Women.**

The SPFII promoted the participation of Indigenous women at the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and the Outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000).

- Rigoberta Menchu, Nobel Prize Laureate will participate in the official celebration of International Women's Day. (High profile will be given to the commemoration of International Women's Day during the first week of the 49th session of the Commission on the Status

of Women (CSW). A full-day commemoration will be organized. The theme: *"Thirty Years of United Nations Efforts to Promote Gender Equality"* will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the First World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975. Panelists will include persons present at each of the world conferences, in Mexico, Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing, and teleconferencing could be utilized to ensure direct involvement of women from all regions.)

- An indigenous young woman from Mexico has been selected by the CSW Bureau to be invited as a keynote speaker on the panel on *"Future perspectives of the promotion of gender equality: through the eyes of young women and men"*.
- The SPFII is also organizing a side event on Beijing's review from the Indigenous women's perspective.
- Secretariat of the UNPFII is making closely with the indigenous women's Caucus to facilitate their participation, including a press conference at the United Nations and a training course.

Visit our website to be updated:

[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/Beijing\\_Review.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/Beijing_Review.htm)

#### **Task Force on Indigenous Women of IANWGE: Secretariat of the UNPFII convened meeting and collected inputs for paper to be presented in February 2005.**

The TFIW adopted its Terms of Reference on 13 September 2004 with the purpose to integrate and strengthen gender mainstreaming as regards indigenous women's roles and the special concerns of indigenous women as an emerging key issue in the work of the United Nations system. In order to promote the accomplishment of the short-term goals of the TFIW Terms of Reference by February 2005, the members of the TFIW sent inputs to the Secretariat of

the UNPFII regarding the short-term goals of the Task Force.

### **Indigenous Peoples and Gender: a publication of Briefing Notes**

As a result of cooperation between the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI) and the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, it was agreed that a series of briefing notes on *Gender and Indigenous Issues* will be produced and they will be jointly published and disseminated during the Review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the CSW and the Fourth Session of the UNPFII in the Spring of 2005.

### **Launch of the Distinguished Lecture Series on Indigenous Issues**

**Lecture of Prof. Stavenhagen, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, 21 October New York.**

The Human Development Report Office of UNDP and the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues hosted a lecture by Professor Stavenhagen on *"Indigenous Peoples: Diversity and Development"*.

Professor Stavenhagen is Professor Emeritus in Sociology, El Colegio de Mexico, and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. He is one of the world's leading academics on indigenous issues and the author of several important publications. He also contributed to the Human Development Report 2004: Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World.

Professor Stavenhagen described the situation of indigenous peoples around the

world and he explained his three main areas of work: the thematic research on issues that have an impact on the human rights situation and the fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples; country visits; and communication with governments concerning allegations of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples worldwide.

His lecture also highlighted the activities and developments in each of these areas of work and he explained that country visits are an excellent way of analysing and understanding in-situ the situation of indigenous peoples in the light of every possible circumstance, and they are also an important awareness-raising tool in the international community. In 2002, the Special Rapporteur undertook country visits to Guatemala and the Philippines. In 2003 he visited Mexico and Chile. In March and May 2004 respectively, the Special Rapporteur visited Colombia and Canada. Reports on these last two visits will be presented to the Commission on Human Rights in April 2005. To read more about the Special Rapporteur's work please visit:

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/rapporteur/>

### **Second International Decade**

**General Assembly 59<sup>th</sup> Session:  
Indigenous Issues, November and December**

The Third Committee recommended the proclamation of a Second Decade of World's Indigenous People, commencing on 1 January 2005, with the goal to further strengthen of international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development, by means of action-oriented programmes and specific projects.

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/news/a59500/a59500eng.pdf>

### **Preparations for WSIS Phase II**

In addition, the Secretary-General was asked to appoint the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs as the Second Decade's Coordinator, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish a voluntary fund as a successor to the already-existing Voluntary Fund established for the first Decade. Moreover, the Assembly decided to continue observing the International Day of Indigenous People during the Second Decade.

Before the draft's adoption, the representative of Ecuador, speaking on behalf of the Andean Community, said that the first Decade had represented a valuable opportunity to become more aware of the situation of indigenous people and to redress their pressing problems. The Andean Community felt it important to proclaim a second Decade in order to step up efforts and further consolidate the progress made in the first. Indigenous people required additional attention for their development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals would be of benefit to them. After the adoption, the representative of Australia said he had joined the consensus consistent with his Government's position that a second Decade should be coordinated so as to ensure that there was no duplication of efforts. However, Australia would have preferred that the language on the Working Group elaborating a draft declaration on indigenous rights, more clearly reflected that the Group's mandate would end with the present decade. His joining the consensus should not be interpreted as approval to extend the Working Group's mandate for the second Decade.

On December 22 the Plenary of the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/59/174, which officially proclaimed the Second International Decade of World's Indigenous People. For the full text, please see our website:

The United Nations Permanent Forum at its Third Session in May 2004 recommended that the UN system continue its advocacy work on Indigenous connectivity in preparation for Phase II of WSIS, taking into account the outcomes of the Global Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Information Society. The Permanent Forum applauded and supported the decision taken by WSIS to establish multi-stakeholder portals that allow communication between Indigenous peoples at the national level.

The Aboriginal Canadian Portal Working Group is co-hosting a two day International Indigenous Thematic Planning Conference, in conjunction with its National Connecting Aboriginal Peoples in Canada Forum, in Ottawa, Canada, in March 2005. It is hoped that this will facilitate global Indigenous Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) partnerships and provide the momentum and content to begin planning and recruitment for the WSIS Phase II that will take place six months later in Tunisia. The Secretariat of the UNPFII is cooperating with the Aboriginal Canadian Portal Working Group. Please visit our website:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/news/WSIS/newsottawaevent.htm>

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