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Welcome to *MESSAGE STICK*¹, the newsletter that highlights the activities undertaken by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) as well as its Secretariat for the period from April to August 2008.

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.

The Seventh Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The Seventh Session of the Permanent Forum was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, 21 April to 2 May 2008.



This year's session was memorable in many ways. The Session was held a month earlier than usual, in order not to clash with the 9th Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Attending the seventh session were 11 newly appointed expert Members of the Forum in addition to 4 other members who were nominated for a second three year term. This was also the final session of Mrs. Qin Xiaomei, the Permanent Forum member from China, who will be succeeded by another Forum Member on 1 January 2009.

The Seventh Session also marked the final participation of Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen as the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, who after serving two three-year terms has been succeeded by Mr. James Anaya, the first indigenous person to hold the post.



The seventh session was also attended by President Evo Morales Ayma of Bolivia, the first head of State to address the Permanent Forum, drawing rapturous applause, somewhat unusual for UN meetings.



After President Morales had completed his speech, it was down to business for the Forum attendees. This year's theme was Climate Change and the discussions brought up a wealth of issues from all corners of the world. In addition to the formal meetings of the Forum a total of 61 side events were organized by indigenous peoples' organizations, NGOs, UN agencies and states. All of these formal and informal meetings informed the discussions of the members of the forum and directly or indirectly influenced the outcome of the session, which is contained in the Report on the Seventh Session.

On the last day of the seventh session, some participants expressed their concerns over some of the recommendations of the Forum. At the heart of the concerns was a first draft of recommendations concerning the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and BioCarbon Fund and the policy debates on reducing emissions from deforestation and ecosystem degradation (REDD). These participants were advocating more critical language on these initiatives. The final version of the Permanent Forum recommendations had indeed taken these concerns into consideration, even if the Forum did not explicitly condemn these policies. The Forum did state that "...the current framework for REDD is not supported by most indigenous peoples... In order to

directly benefit indigenous peoples, new proposals for avoided deforestation or reduced emissions from deforestation must address the need for global and national policy reforms and be guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, respecting rights to land, territories and resources; and the rights of self determination and the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned." ²



The Report of the session and all other relevant materials are available on the Permanent Forum website.

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_seventh.html

Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will hold its first session from 1 to 3 October 2008 at the United Nations Office in Geneva. Registration is now open online. For further information, see the [accreditation page](#) on the OHCHR website.

The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has been established by the Human Rights Council, as a successor body of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations which was under the now defunct Human Rights Commission. The Expert Mechanism is a

² Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: Report on the Seventh Session (E/2008/43), paragraph 45.

subsidiary expert mechanism of the Human Rights Council established to assist the Council in providing thematic expertise on the rights of indigenous peoples, focusing mainly on studies and research-based advice. The Expert Mechanism may also suggest proposals to the Council for its consideration and approval.

The Human Rights Council has appointed five experts, who will serve for a three-year period and may be re-elected for one additional period. For its first session it will meet for three days on 1-3 October, 2008 and thereafter for up to five days, and these sessions may be a combination of open and private meetings.

The five experts appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council for the period 2008-2010 are:

Mr. John Bernhard Henriksen	(Norway)
Ms. Catherine Odimba Kombe	(Congo)
Ms. Jannie Lasimbang	(Malaysia)
Mr. José Mencio Mlintas	(Philippines)
Mr. José Carlos Morales Morales	(Costa Rica)

In addition, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people and a member of the Permanent Forum shall be invited to attend and contribute to the annual meeting.

The meeting shall also be open to the participation, as observers of:

- States
- United Nations mechanisms, bodies and specialized agencies, funds and programmes
- Intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations and mechanisms in the field of human rights
- National human rights institutions and other relevant national bodies
- Academics and experts on indigenous issues
- Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council
- Indigenous peoples' organizations

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will act as the Secretariat of the Expert Mechanism (expertmechanism@ohchr.org).

For further information about the Expert Mechanism, go to the [Expert Mechanism page](#) on the OHCHR website.

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/ExpertMechanism/index.htm>

Resource Kit on Indigenous Peoples' Issues

The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum, in cooperation with ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and SCBD has published the Resource Kit on Indigenous Peoples Issues. The Kit is principally addressed to UN Country Teams (UNCTs), and other development agents, providing them with guidance as to how to engage with indigenous peoples and include their perspectives in development processes. The Resource Kit provides information on indigenous issues through practical examples and how to engage indigenous peoples effectively in development processes, including Common Country Assessments/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF), MDG monitoring, PRSP and others. It should also help UNCTs implement the UNDG guidelines and the recommendations of the Permanent Forum in addition to serving as a tool that enhances and strengthens the role of UNCTs in integrating indigenous issues to the UN system's work at the country level.

Finally, the Resource Kit includes a thorough, if not exhaustive overview of international agreements and legal frameworks that deal directly or indirectly with indigenous issues as well as international mechanisms that specifically target indigenous peoples.

The Resource Kit is on the UNPFII website here...

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/resource_kit_indigenous_2008.pdf



ECOSOC elections on Asia/Pacific Permanent Forum Member

On 16 July 2008 elections were held at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the succession of Mrs. Qin Xiaomei from the Asia/Pacific region after the end of this year. The result was that Mr. Eugenio A. Insigne from the Philippines will become a member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as of 1 January 2009.

ECOSOC Decision on the Seventh Session Report

On Thursday 24 July the Economic and Social Council adopted all three draft decisions contained in the Report on the Seventh Session of the Permanent Forum, authorizing a three day international expert group meeting, deciding that the eighth session of the Forum shall be held at UN Headquarters from 18 to 29 May 2009, and approving the provisional agenda.

All three draft decisions are contained in the Seventh Session Report.
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_seventh.html

Trust Fund of the Second Decade of the World's Indigenous People

The Trust Fund for the Second Decade was established to promote, support and implement the objectives of the Decade, giving priority to projects concerning the main areas of the Second Decade: culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development.

Indigenous organizations or organizations working for indigenous peoples can apply for small grants from the Trust Fund. Guidelines to applicants for the Fund are available below. The Fund is mainly used for small grants projects with a budget for up to 10,000 US\$ covering one year's expenses.

2009 Call for Proposals

Applications for Trust Fund grants will be accepted between 20 August 2008 and 1 November 2008. Applications are to be submitted to: indigenousfund@un.org during this time period.

All applicants must submit their project proposals in accordance with the Trust Fund Grant Application Instructions, and must also submit a proposal summary sheet, in conformity with the instructions for filling out the summary sheet. Applicants should also review the Funding Guidelines for Activities Relating to the United Nations Second Decade of the World's Indigenous People, which were amended in July 2008.

All of the necessary information is on the Permanent Forum website.
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/second_trustfund.html

International Day of the World's Indigenous People

The International Day of the World's Indigenous People was observed at UN Headquarters on Friday 8 August 2008, given that this year, the International Day was on a Saturday. The theme of this year's observance at UNHQ was conciliation and reconciliation between indigenous peoples and states. This theme was timely given recent events at both national and international levels.



The issue of conciliation/reconciliation raises a number of important issues and many of them were tackled by a panel that was composed of *Gert Rosenthal*, Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations, *Henri Paul Normandin*, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, *Andrew Goledzinowski*, Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, *Marcie Mersky*, Liaison Officer with the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, *Chief Oren Lyons*, Faithkeeper, Turtle Clan, Onondaga Nation, Member of Grand Council of Chiefs of the Haudenosaunee and *Barbara James Snyder* of the Washoe-Paiute Nation.



Prior to the panel, the messages of the Secretary General, the Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs and the Chairperson of the Permanent Forum were all delivered to a close to fully packed Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium. Furthermore, a most memorable performance was presented by the Hālau i Ka Wēkiu school from Hawai'i.

In addition to the SPFII organized observance, the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations organized a film screening, showing *The Apology* chronicling the historic apology of the Government of Australia to the

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia, and in particular to the “stolen generation” people who were forcibly removed from their families, as children as part of the policy of assimilation that lasted until the 1970s.

The whole event was broadcast on the UN Webcast service, and the webcast, messages of the day and other related material is available on the Permanent Forum website http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/news_internationalday2008.html

Members of the Permanent Forum 2008-2010

The Permanent Forum is comprised of sixteen independent experts, functioning in their personal capacity, who serve for a term of three years as Members and may be re-elected or re-appointed for one additional term.

Eight of the Members are nominated by governments and eight are nominated by indigenous organizations in their regions.

The current membership of the Permanent Forum is as follows:

Mr. Simeon Adewale Adekanye	Nigeria
Mr. Lars Anders-Baer	Saami, Sweden
Mr. Hassan Id Balkassm	Amazigh, Morocco
Ms. Elisa Canqui Mollo	Aymara, Bolivia
Mr. Bartolomé Clavero	Spain
Mr. Mick Dodson	Yawuru, Australia
Ms. Tonya Gonella Frichner	Onondaga, USA
Ms Paimaneh Hasteh	Iran
Ms. Margaret Lokawua	Karimjong, Uganda
Mr. Carlos Mamani Condori	Aymara, Bolivia
Ms. Liliane Muzangi Mbella	Democratic Republic of Congo
	Russian Federation
Mr. Andrei Nikiforov	Russian Federation
Mr. Carsten Smith	Norway
Mr. Pavel Sulyandziga	Udege, Russian Federation
Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz	Igorot, Philippines
Mrs. Qin Xiaomei (until 31 Dec. 2008)	China

Mr. Eugenio A. Insigne of the Philippines will succeed Mrs. Qin on 1 January 2009 and will serve until 31 December 2010.



Forum member participation in other events³

Elisa Canqui Mollo participated in a workshop entitled Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples 28-29 May, 2008 in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, which was hosted by the National Climate Change Programme of the Viceministry for Territorial Planning and the Ministry for Development Planning of Bolivia.

The workshop focused on strengthening coordination between indigenous peoples and the government in relation to climate change, develop a strategy for participation and follow-up for national and international climate change processes, provide information to indigenous peoples about the REDD mechanism and to identify potential avenues for indigenous peoples' participation within REDD.

The workshop webpage has more information, including Ms. Canqui Mollo's presentation.

<http://www.odl.gov.bo/cursos052008-2.html>

Pavel Sulyandziga participated in the *Fifth World Congress of the Finno-Ugric Peoples* 27-28 June in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia, where he delivered a [statement](#) on behalf of Victoria-Tauli Corpuz, Chairperson of the Permanent Forum. The [statement](#) is available on the Permanent Forum website.

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/statement_vtc_finnougric08.doc

Elisa Canqui Mollo participated in the *Workshop on indicators of Indigenous Peoples' well-being* 30 June to 2 July on Quito, hosted by the Fondo Indígena. The workshop received information on about the Permanent Forums' work on indicators (see document [E/C.19/2008/9](#)) and discussed recommendations and observations on the development of indicators of well-being. Ms. Canqui Mollo presented the final report on Indicators, as well as the regional reports, which are available from the sixth and seventh session pages of the Permanent Forum website.

³ This is not an exhaustive list of activities carried out by Members of the Permanent Forum.

Sixth Session:

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_sixth.html

Seventh Session:

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_seventh.html

Forthcoming events and meetings

Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues – Annual Meeting

Paris, France

15-17 September 2008

Hosted by UNESCO, the objective of the meeting is to further assess and advance joint work on promoting indigenous peoples' right to development with culture and identity in light of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The IASG will also discuss country-level processes, including the implementation of the joint UN Action Plan on operationalizing the recently adopted United Nations Development Group Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues.

For more information on the IASG, see the UNPFII website here...

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/iasg.html>

Lecture Series: Indigenous Peoples' Issues: International Perspectives & Global Challenges

New York, United States

25 September 2008

The Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University in New York is organizing a lecture series on Indigenous Peoples' Issues: International Perspectives & Global Challenges in co-sponsorship with the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The first event in the series, *Indigenous Peoples: A Global Historical Overview*, featuring Elsa Stamatopoulou, Chief of the



Secretariat of the Permanent Forum and Tonya Gonella Frichner, president of the American Indian Law Alliance and Vice-Chairperson of the Permanent Forum will take place at 16:00 on 25 September at Deutsches Haus, 420 West 116th Street.

Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Geneva, Switzerland

1-3 October 2008

The first meeting of the Expert Mechanism is open to observers from States, UN Agencies, NGOs, Indigenous Peoples' Organizations, Human Rights Organizations and academics.

For further information go to the [Expert Mechanism page](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/ExpertMechanism/index.htm) on the OHCHR website here...
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/ExpertMechanism/index.htm>

Regional Seminar on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Lima, Peru

6-8 October 2008

The objective of the seminar is to review and identify adequate mechanisms for the dissemination and implementation of international instruments on the rights of indigenous peoples at the national and local level.

The seminar is organized by the Working Group on Indigenous peoples of Regional Directors of UN Agencies and Programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The UN System and Russian Indigenous Peoples of the North: Fifteen Years of Collaboration

Khabarovsk, Russian Federation

9-11 October 2008

Organized by the Regional Government of Khabarovsk and the Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)

Indigenous Communities, Tourism and Biodiversity Workshop Series: New Information and Web-based Technologies Workshop II: Islands, Pacific Region

Samoa

3-5 November, 2008

The workshop is organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Region Environment Programme, and the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute of Auckland University. It is aimed at reinforcing the sustainable use of biodiversity in tourism through bolstering the web-based capacities of indigenous tourism operators.

Go to the CBD website for more information
<http://www.cbd.int/>
<http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2008/ntf-2008-094-tourism-ndc-en.pdf>

63rd Session of the General Assembly – Indigenous Issues

UN Headquarters, New York

20 October 2008

Agenda item 64, Indigenous Issues will be discussed at the Third Committee of the General Assembly as a part of the discussions on the Promotion of Human Rights.

Click here to view the [Provisional Agenda for the 63rd session of the General Assembly](#).

<http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?Open&DS=a/63/150&Lang=E>



The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum

The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 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)

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