

Vol. 6 No. 3 Oct. 2008 - Jan. 2009

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Welcome to *MESSAGE STICK*<sup>1</sup>, 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 October 2008 to January 2009.

### **Expert Group Meeting on Article 42 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

In September 2007, the General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, marking a major victory for the world's indigenous peoples and an extraordinary achievement in international human rights standard

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<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.

setting. The adoption of Declaration signals a new mandate for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in this regard, establishing that:

*The United Nations, its bodies, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and specialized agencies, including at the country level, and States shall promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration.*

At its seventh session, the UNPFII recommended that the Economic and Social Council authorize an international expert group meeting to discuss in greater detail the way in which the Permanent Forum should address its new mandate under article 42 of the UN Declaration. At its regular session in 2008, ECOSOC approved the Forum's recommendation in decision 2008/249.



The Expert Group Meeting was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 14 to 16 January 2009. It was attended by indigenous experts and UNPFII members as well as interested Member States, UN Agencies and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations. During the meeting, participants were asked to outline approaches that the



Permanent Forum can take to promote the implementation of the UN Declaration and to set out methodologies by which the Permanent Forum can fulfill its new responsibilities. Specifically, participants were requested to consider the following discussion points detailed below and make recommendations regarding each.

- Integration of the UN Declaration into the ongoing work of the Permanent Forum
- Capacity development for indigenous and non-indigenous communities and organizations
- Promotion of respect for and full application of the UN Declaration at the State level
- Dialogue with States regarding respect for and application of the UN Declaration and follow up on its effectiveness
- Cooperation within the United Nations system



Following discussions, the expert group recommended that the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues decide to invite participants to the Forum, States in particular, indigenous peoples and UN agencies to submit written reports under Article 42 of the Declaration providing substantive information on the application and implementation of the Declaration at the national and local level; and to appoint a task team consisting of eight members of the Permanent Forum to examine reports and communicate with the submitting parties as may be appropriate. The experts also recommended that the Permanent Forum encourage national human rights institutions and indigenous peoples' institutions to promote respect for and full implementation of the Declaration at

the national and local levels; encourage States to incorporate adequate information on the implementation of the Declaration in the 'core report' to the human rights treaty bodies; and recommend that States should 'in the spirit of harmonious and cooperative relationship with the indigenous peoples' establish as soon as possible where it does not already exist a national dialogue with indigenous peoples on human rights based on the Declaration .

The meeting also recommended that the Permanent Forum request the Secretary-General to provide an adequate budget for the purpose of meeting the requirements of Article 42 of the Declaration and remind UN agencies to take note of and respond to Article 42 of the Declaration and, as a matter of priority, directly integrate relevant provisions of the Declaration into the respective policies, programs and strategies of each UN agency. Furthermore, such agencies should undertake initiatives, within a reasonable timeframe, to ensure indigenous peoples' effective engagement, dialogue and negotiations regarding the exercise of their human rights.

The report of the Workshop will be presented to the 8<sup>th</sup> session of the Permanent Forum.

### **Permanent Forum members react to violence in Bolivia**

As violent events were taking place in Bolivia in the autumn of 2008, the three Permanent Forum Members who participated in the annual Inter-Agency Support Group meeting, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Carlos Mamani Condori and Margaret Lokawua issued a public statement raising their concerns about the violence directed at indigenous peoples in the departments of Santa Cruz, Tarija, Beni and Pando. The full text of their statement follows below:

*Press Release from the Chairperson of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Regarding the Recent Events in Bolivia*

Recalling the message delivered to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues by



the President of Bolivia, Evo Morales Ayma, on 21 April 2008; noting that the Forum warmly welcomed the presence of President Morales and recognized the achievements of his government in the recognition, promotion, protection and fulfillment of indigenous peoples' human rights; considering that the mandate of President Morales and his constitutional government was democratically reaffirmed through the referendum celebrated in August 2008, the President of the Permanent Forum, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, expresses grave concern over the recent developments in Bolivia.

We note that violence and racism have been unleashed against the indigenous peoples of the departments of Santa Cruz, Tarija, Beni and Pando with the purpose of ensuring and increasing the control over lands and resources by a small minority and perpetuating the existence of captive indigenous communities in the Amazon and the Chaco. This represents a gross violation of human rights.

These violent acts have been taking place since 9 September with the collusion, to say the least, of local authorities. The most egregious events have taken place in the department of Pando, where peasants, students, children, women and unionists, mainly indigenous, were victims of an ambush that caused human loss and has left a number of people wounded. This atmosphere of terror and threats has forced an indeterminate number of people in Pando and other departments to go into hiding. The offices of indigenous organizations, government agencies, human rights NGOs and news media have been ransacked or destroyed.

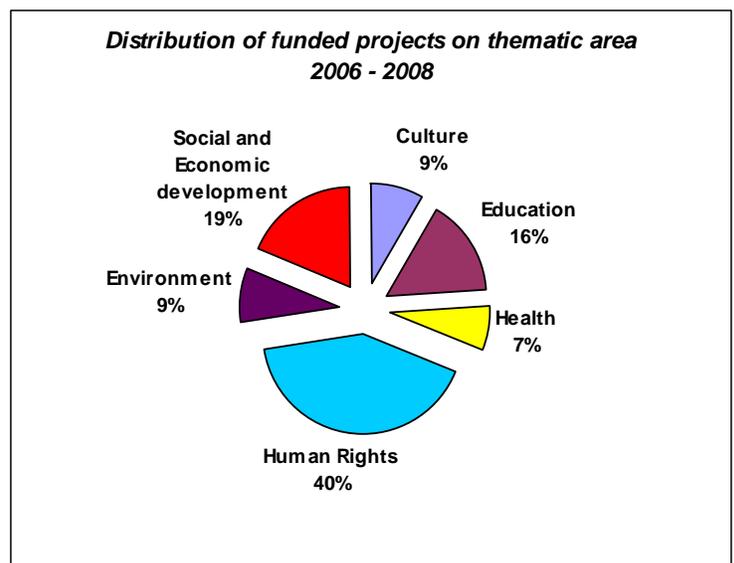
The Chairperson of the Permanent Forum fervently adds her voice to the concerns raised by the international community, renewing support for the democratically elected constitutional government of Bolivia. We call upon the President and government of Bolivia to hold firm to their policies of recognition, promotion, protection and fulfillment of human rights, particularly indigenous peoples' rights, by taking all legal measures required to put an end to these violent acts, as well as to locate and bring to justice, under due process, those

responsible. The Chairperson of the Forum also calls upon the responsible parties to cease these criminal acts immediately.

*This statement is endorsed by the Chairperson of the Permanent Forum, Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, and Forum Members Mr. Carlos Mamani Condori and Ms. Margaret Lokanua, who have participated at the annual meeting of the United Nations Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues.*

## Second Decade small grants Trust Fund - Overview of projects granted

From the first call in 2006 for project proposals, the Trust Fund small grants programme has received more than 571 project proposals. The Trust Fund has had the financial capability to fund 58 of these, distributed on the following thematic areas (see table below).



At the end of the 2009 call in November 2008 SPFII had received 120 project proposals which will be reviewed the advisory body (the Bureau of the Permanent Forum in May 2009). Given the high



interest shown by indigenous peoples' organizations for the Trust Funds the SPFII naturally hopes to be able to grant more funds in the future than the 16 % of the projects funded from 2006 to date.



## General Assembly Resolution on Indigenous Issues

On 11 November, the Third Committee of the General Assembly adopted a draft Resolution on indigenous issues (A/RES/63/161), which contains three operative paragraphs.

The first operative paragraph requests the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples to report annually on the implementation of his mandate to the General Assembly. Although the Special Rapporteur previously made annual reports to the General Assembly, the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, as renewed in 2007 by the Human Rights Council, does not provide for his participation in the General Assembly and he therefore did not take part in the sixty-third session. The purpose of the operative paragraph is to secure his future participation to assure and maintain a constructive dialogue between the Special Rapporteur and the General Assembly.

The second operative paragraph calls upon the Secretary General, in consultation with Member States, relevant United Nations agencies and mechanisms, and other stakeholders including indigenous organizations, to submit a mid-term

assessment report to the General Assembly at its sixty fifth session, that evaluates progress made in the achievement of the goal and objectives of the Second Decade.

The final operative paragraph is consistent with operative paragraph 8 of Human Rights Council Resolution 9/7, and adjusts the mandate of the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Indigenous Populations to facilitate the participation of representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations in the Expert Mechanism in accordance with Human Rights Council Resolution 6/36.

The Resolution was introduced by Guatemala and co-sponsored by Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iraq, Italy, Madagascar, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Slovenia, Spain, Suriname, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, United States of America and Uruguay.

The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues notes that the resolution was discussed and processed by Member States in an atmosphere of consensus and that it gained the support of many countries, including countries that had abstained from voting or had voted against the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the time of its adoption in 2007 by the General Assembly.

For further information on the adoption of the Resolution, see this press release issued by the UN Department of Public Information:  
<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/ga10801.doc.htm>

## 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
Mr. Eugenio A. Insigne	Philippines
Ms. Margaret Lokawua	Karimjong, Uganda
Mr. Carlos Mamani Condori	Aymara, Bolivia
Ms. Liliane Muzangi Mbella	Democratic Republic of Congo
Mr. Andrei Nikiforov	Russian Federation
Mr. Carsten Smith	Norway
Mr. Pavel Sulyandziga	Udege, Russian Federation
Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz	Igorot, Philippines

### **UNPFII and SPFII participation in meetings and events**

Permanent Forum members and SPFII staff are frequently invited to participate in a variety of meetings and events related to the work of the Permanent Forum. In recent months, UNPFII members and SPFII staff participated in the following events:

#### *Annual Meeting of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues and official visit to UNESCO by UNPFII*

*15-18 September 2008*

Hosted by UNESCO, the annual meeting of the IASG gathered some 25 agencies, in addition to 3 members of the UNPFII, Ms Tauli-Corpuz, Mr Mamani and Ms Lokawua. UNESCO gave a high profile to the visit with an opening event on "Indigenous peoples; development with culture and identity", that heard the address of the Director-

General, Mr Matsuura. The event was attended by UNESCO leadership, staff as well as delegations of states to UNESCO. The main agenda item of the IASG was the subject mentioned above—which will be the special theme of the UNPFII at its 2010 session. The official visit of the UNPFII to UNESCO was conducted by the three above-mentioned members of the Forum. The schedule included meetings with all UNESCO Divisions at high level and the discussions focused on the opportunities offered by UNESCO for progress on indigenous peoples' issues as well as the challenges it faced, especially in terms of opening its various processes to the participation of indigenous organizations.

#### *Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 1-3 October, 2008*

*Geneva*

Permanent Forum members, Mick Dodson and Bartolome Clavero participated as observers in the first meeting of the Expert Mechanism.

#### *Seminar for South America on the Declaration 6-8 October, 2008*

*Lima, Peru*

SPFII participated in the South American Seminar on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, held in Lima, Peru on 6-8 October. The Seminar, which was organized by the United Nations Regional Directors' Group for Latin America and the Caribbean, brought together over 70 participants from indigenous peoples' organizations, human rights institutions and governments from ten countries in order to exchange experiences and good practices and to make recommendations for the implementation of the Declaration. Similar meetings are planned for Central America and Caribbean in 2009.

#### *The UN System and Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation 6-13 October*

*Khabarovsk, Russian Federation*

The Conference focused on the environmental situation in Khabarovsk Krai and cooperation with



bilateral or multilateral organizations on issues related to indigenous peoples of the region and on the application of the UN standards in general and the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in particular, to the Russian Federation.

Participation by Pavel Sulyandziga and SPFII.

*Congres mondial de la coordination autochtone francophone*  
17-19 October, 2008

*Québec, Canada*

Hassan Id Balkassm participated on behalf of the Permanent Forum.

*World Urban Forum, Side event titled Indigenous Peoples in Urban Areas*

3-6 November, 2008

*Nanjing, China*

Participation by Elisa Canqui Mollo and SPFII.

<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=535&cid=5928#6>

*General Assembly of Fondo Indígena*

5-7 November, 2008

*Mexico City*

SPFII was invited to participate at the Inter-Agency Meeting in preparation of the 8th General Assembly of the Fondo Indígena, as well as to participate as an observer at the 8th General Assembly of the Fondo Indígena, held in Mexico City on 5-7 November 2008.

Participation by SPFII

[http://www.fondoindigena.org/docs\\_viii.shtml](http://www.fondoindigena.org/docs_viii.shtml)

*Foro sobre la Declaración de las NU sobre los derechos de los pueblos indígenas*

6 November, 2008

*San José, Costa Rica*

Participation by Bartolomé Clavero

*Global Indigenous Stop TB Expert Meeting*

November 12-14, 2008

*Toronto, Canada*

The Global Indigenous Stop TB Expert Meeting, was held in Toronto, Canada, on November 12-14

2008 and was co-hosted by the Assembly of First Nations and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. The meeting's objectives were to Raise awareness about the impact of TB upon indigenous populations globally, to shed light on the challenges in controlling and treating TB among indigenous peoples, to share best practices, to produce recommendations for new initiatives in controlling and treating TB and to develop recommendations for the upcoming 8th session of the UNPFII and the Stop TB Partnership conference in Brazil. The meeting brought together approximately 70 experts on TB and on indigenous peoples' issues, including five Permanent Forum Members.

Participation by Hassan Id Balkassm, Elisa Canqui Mollo, Paimaneh Hasteh and Carlos Mamani Condori and SPFII.

<http://www.globalstoptb.com/about/about.htm>

*Census 2010 workshop and the inclusion of an ethnic approach*

19-21 November, 2008

*Santiago, Chile*

Participation by Elisa Canqui Mollo.

*VIII Latin American Congress on Intercultural and Bilingual Education*

3-5 December, 2008

*Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Participation by Elisa Canqui Mollo

<http://www.congresoeib.org/>

*IFAD Workshop on Indigenous Peoples' Assistance Facility: Supporting the self-determined development of indigenous communities*

12-14 January 2009

*Arequipa, Peru*

Participation by Elisa Canqui Mollo and Carlos Mamani Condori.

*World Social Forum*

27 January – 1 February, 2009

*Belem de Para, Brazil*

Participation by Carlos Mamani Condori



## **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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