

August-October, 2009

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### [The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum](#)

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 for the period from February 2009 to July 2009. It is produced by SPFII staff.

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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.

## **International Day of the World's Indigenous People**

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was observed at UN Headquarters on Monday 10 August. The theme of this year's observance was indigenous peoples and HIV/AIDS which Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon addressed in his message.



*Indigenous peoples also tend to suffer from the low standards of health associated with poverty, malnutrition, environmental contamination and inadequate healthcare. With that in mind, this year's observance of the International Day focuses on the threat of HIV/AIDS. It is essential that indigenous peoples have access to the information and infrastructure necessary for detection, treatment and protection.*

*Insufficient progress in health, in particular, points to a persistent and profound gap in many countries between the formal recognition of indigenous peoples' rights and the actual situation on the ground.*





A panel of experts discussed the challenges that indigenous peoples face regarding health in general and HIV/AIDS in particular. The discussion was both informative and emotional and was very well received by the audience. The panelists were Kent Lebsack (Owe Aku - Bring Back the Way - a traditional Lakota (Sioux) Cultural Preservation Organization), Berti Lindblad (Director, UNAIDS New York Office), Chris Archibald (Director, Surveillance and Risk Assessment Division of the Public Health Agency of Canada) and Olivia Sloan (Johns Hopkins University). The panel discussion was moderated by Tonya Gonella Firchner (Vice-Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues).



The American Association of Crimean Tatars organized a cultural event that included traditional music and dancing.

A webcast recording of the whole event is available on the SPFII website, in addition to the messages of the day.

[http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/news\\_internationalday2009.html](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/news_internationalday2009.html)

## Nominations of UNPFII Members

The current membership of the Permanent Forum is due to expire at the end of 2010. Nominations have requested for the three-year period from January 2011 until December 2013. Current members who have served the maximum of two terms (6 years) as Permanent Forums members cannot be nominated for a further term. It has been the understanding of the indigenous caucus that the eight (8) indigenous nominated members should be from the seven socio-cultural regions determined to give broad representation to the world's indigenous peoples. The regions are: Africa; Asia; Central and South America and the Caribbean; the Arctic; Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia; North America; and the Pacific.

It was also the understanding that the 8th member would be nominated from one of the three largest indigenous populated regions (Latin America, Asia and Africa) which would be rotated every three years. Latin America will have an extra member for the next term (2011 – 2013).

It is encouraged that consultations amongst indigenous organizations commence as soon as possible to ensure that the President of the Economic and Social Council has suitable candidates for consideration and appointment.

In considering possible candidates account should be taken of the principles of geographic distribution, and gender balance. Furthermore and in order for nominations to be complete, it is important to provide recent curriculum vitae of the nominees for consideration by the President of the Economic and Social Council. Information about the nominating organization(s) should also be submitted.

All correspondence should be sent to the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Room DC2-1454, New York, NY 10017, United States of America  
**OR** email to: [indigenous\\_un@un.org](mailto:indigenous_un@un.org)

**The deadline for submission of nominations is 1 February 2010.**



Information has also been sent to Member States, requesting them to submit their nominations early 2010.

The process for elections to the UNPFII is described in ECOSOC Resolution 2000/22 and 2001/316.

## **UNPFII Website updates:**

### **Chinese website**

The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum has launched a website in the Chinese language. The Chinese version of the UNPFII website contains information about the Permanent Forum, its mandate and activities. It also contains information about the sessions of the Permanent Forum. The Secretariat hopes to launch an Arabic version of the website in the not too distant future, so that all six official languages are represented.

## **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

On a related note, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples continues spreading around the world. In addition to the six official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, English, Spanish, French, Russian and Chinese), the Declaration has been translated into the following languages:

[Bisaya](#) (spoken in the Philippines)

[Cha'palaa](#) (spoken in Ecuador)

[Crimean Tatar](#),

[Danish](#)

[Greenlandic](#)

[Hindi](#)

[Ilokano](#) (spoken in the Philippines)

[Italian](#)

[Kichua](#) (spoken in the Andes)

[Kwéyòl](#) (spoken in Saint Lucia)

[Guaraní](#) (Spoken in South America)

[Japanese](#)

[Maori](#) (spoken in New Zealand)

[Maya](#) (Spoken in Central America)

[Mapuche](#) (Spoken in South America)

[Miskito](#) (spoken in Nicaragua and Honduras)

[Náhuatl](#) (Spoken in Mexico)

[Pilipino](#)

[Portuguese](#)

[Turkish](#)

[Wichi](#) (Spoken in South America)

All of these language versions of the Declaration are available on the UNPFII Website. The Mayan and Náhuatl versions of the Declaration are also available as audio files. Additional languages will be gladly received by the Secretariat to be placed on the website.

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



## **EGM on Development with Culture and Identity**

The International Expert Group Meeting entitled Indigenous Peoples: Development with Culture and identity: Articles 3 and 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will be held at UN Headquarters on 12-14 January 2010. The Meeting will be attended by seven indigenous experts in addition to a number of Permanent Forum members and representatives from UN Agencies and Funds. Representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations are all welcome to attend. Those who wish to attend must contact the Secretariat in advance by phone (1 917 367 5100) or email ([indigenous\\_un@un.org](mailto:indigenous_un@un.org)).

## **Participation of UNPFII members in other meetings**

### **Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Carlos Mamani Condori attended the second session of the Mechanism, 10-14 August in Geneva. Below is a summary of Mr. Mamani's statement at the second session.

Participating in the second session of the Expert Mechanism, Carlos Mamani stressed the importance of cooperation between the Permanent Forum, the Special Rapporteur and the Expert Mechanism.

Human Rights is one of the six mandated areas that the Permanent Forum discusses each year and at its eighth session, the Permanent Forum emphasized the human rights of indigenous people dealing with transnational corporations and especially those involved in extractive industries. Mr.

Mamani highlighted the importance of the human rights of indigenous women and gave a brief overview of some of the most significant recommendations made at the eighth session.

The Permanent Forum's mission to Paraguay and Bolivia to verify complaints regarding the practice of forced labour and servitude among communities of the Guaraní People was also discussed.

A major concern for the Permanent Forum has been the killings in Peru in June this year. The Chair of the Permanent Forum released a statement expressing her shock and deep distress at reports received of the atrocities committed against indigenous peoples in the Amazon region, resulting in the loss of lives, disappearances and grave injuries.

Mr. Mamani accompanied the Special Rapporteur, during his visit to Colombia 25 and 26 July, visiting the communities of El Diviso and la María where people expressed their concern about the armed conflict and displacement from their territories.

Education is one of the mandated areas that the Permanent Forum discusses. Therefore, the Permanent Forum considers the study by the Expert Mechanism on the lessons learned and challenges to achieve the implementation of the right of indigenous peoples to education to be highly important. The Permanent Forum had made a number of recommendations about education.

The Permanent Forum also discussed Article 42 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopting general comment No. 1 (2009) titled "Article 42 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of



Indigenous Peoples”. It sets out how the Permanent Forum’s plans to implement Article 42 of the Declaration.

Finally, the Permanent Forum has decided that the theme for the ninth session of the Permanent Forum would be “Indigenous peoples’ development, with culture and identity: articles 3 and 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”.

In relation to the implementation of the Declaration, the Permanent Forum and the Expert Mechanism, in cooperation with UNICEF and ILO are organizing a Latin American meeting on the protection of the rights of indigenous children and youth and the abolition of child labour. This meeting will take place next year in Cartagena.

More information online about the second session of the Expert Mechanism, and its documents:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/ExpertMechanism/2nd/index.htm>

### **Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues**

The annual meeting of the International Agency Support Group (IASG) on Indigenous Issues took place at the UN Complex in Grigiri, in Nairobi, Kenya 28 - 30 October and was hosted by UN-Habitat and UNEP. The meeting was attended by Permanent Forum members: Ms Margaret Lokawua, Ms Liliane Muzangi Mbela, Mr Hassan Id Balkassm and Mr Lars Anders Baer as well as two SPFII staff members. The aim of meeting was about improving coordination and cooperation among UN agencies. In addition to UN agencies, the meeting was attended by the Resident Coordinator the UN Country Team in Kenya, who spoke of the relevant work of his office, a representative of the Working

Group on Indigenous Populations of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and a number of African indigenous peoples’ organizations. These participants gave a great deal of background information regarding indigenous peoples’ issues throughout Africa. Permanent Forum members Ms Margaret Lokawua, Ms Liliane Muzangi Mbela and Mr Hassan Id Balkassm were also able to brief the IASG on the issues facing indigenous peoples in Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Morocco.

### **Official Visit to UN-Habitat and UNEP**

On 1 October, Permanent Forum members Ms Margaret Lokawua, Ms Liliane Muzangi Mbela, Mr Hassan Id Balkassm and Mr Lars Anders Baer as well as two SPFII staff members were hosted by UN-Habitat and UNEP. The aim of the visit was to brief Permanent Forum members on the work of UN-Habitat and UNEP and included briefings on the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in UNEP, The Division of Regional Cooperation and Major Groups and Stakeholders, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, UNEP Great Apes Survival Project, UN-Habitat's Urban Environmental Planning Branch, the Global Land Tool Network and the Safer Cities Programme. The official visit provided an opportunity to discuss the work of UN-Habitat and UNEP in more detail and every meeting was very informative.



### **Workshop on Indicators on Indigenous Peoples' Well-being and Sustainable Development Focussing on Traditional Knowledge**

On 2 - 3 October, Permanent Forum member Mr Lars Anders Baer and a SPFII staff member attended a workshop on Indicators on Indigenous Peoples' Well-Being which was hosted by Tebtebba Foundation and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. A number of the members of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues (IASG) also attended the meeting. The focus of the meeting was on the status and trends on land use within indigenous territories. A major issue that was discussed at this meeting was the convening of an international technical expert seminar to discuss indicators that could be used in monitoring the situation of indigenous peoples and the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This was in response to a recommendation from the 8th Session of the UNPFII. In discussing this issue, participants made some suggestions for the need to establish indicators for a clear monitoring framework and ILO 169 and UNDRIP could form a basis for such a framework.

### **Committee on the Application of Standards**

Las Anders-Baer attended the meeting of the International Labour Organization Committee on the Application of Standards. The Report of the Committee includes the "Examination of individual case concerning Convention No. 169: Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989 Peru (ratification: 1994) Published 2009" available online at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/conf2009E.htm>

### **UN Country team in Philippines receives training**

The UNCT in the Philippines, in cooperation with SPFII organized a three day training session from 2 to 4 September. All UNCTs have been informed of the availability of this training which is aimed at helping the implementation of the [UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Issues](#). The UNDG Guidelines are available online at <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=270>

### **Indigenous Peoples in Cities**

Elisa Canqui Mollo participated in a meeting on indigenous peoples and urban issues, organized by UN-HABITAT and the Government of Ecuador in Quito, Ecuador. More information online: [http://www.onuhabitat.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=183:pueblos-indigenas-en-las-ciudades-es-tema-de-encuentro-regional&catid=32:genero&Itemid=14](http://www.onuhabitat.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=183:pueblos-indigenas-en-las-ciudades-es-tema-de-encuentro-regional&catid=32:genero&Itemid=14)

### **Regional Seminar on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Bartolome Clavero participated in the seminar on the Declaration, organized by the group of regional UN directors in Latin America and the Caribbean, 10-12 June in Managua. More information online: <http://www.undp.org.ni/noticias/461>

### **High-level event on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries**

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz attended the event, hosted by the UN Secretary General on 23 September at UN Headquarters in New York. More information online: <http://www.un-redd.org/Admin/SecretaryGeneralsHighLevelEventonREDD/tabid/1476/language/en-US/Default.aspx>



## **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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