



June 2010

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The Message Stick¹ highlights the activities undertaken by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) as well as its Secretariat for the period from February to June 2010 to June 2009. It is produced by SPFII staff.

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.

Ninth Session of the Permanent Forum

The ninth session of the Permanent Forum took place in New York at UN Headquarters from 19-30 April 2010. The Ninth Session was memorable for a number of reasons, including the announcement by the Government of New Zealand of its endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the participation of Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations.



Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, addressing the Ninth Session of the Permanent Forum

The Ninth session was also affected by the renovations of UN Headquarters, which made the organization of side events more difficult and also contributed to a decreased participation of indigenous peoples at the session. The good news is that this is only a temporary situation, and within two to three years the Permanent Forum sessions will take place in an improved and modernized UN which will be better suited to serve the needs of large meetings, such as the Permanent Forum Sessions. It is expected that the renovated Conference Building,



where previous session of the Forum have taken place, will be opened in early 2012².

Development with Culture and Identity

The general theme of the ninth session was *Indigenous peoples: Development with culture and identity; articles 3 and 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. A great number of participants spoke on the issue and based on these inputs, the Permanent Forum adopted 29 recommendations related specifically to the theme. The recommendations reflect that it is fundamental for indigenous peoples to preserve and develop their cultures and ways of life. Therefore, development for indigenous peoples is closely linked to many aspects of their lives, from education and indigenous languages, to health, to respect for traditional knowledge and traditional ways of living. The visions of indigenous peoples about well-being and development need to be heard by States, through and indigenous peoples themselves must participate effectively in development processes.

Regional focus on North America

This year's regional focus was on North America where representatives of Canada and the United States participated as well as representatives from indigenous organizations. One of the highlights from this year's session was the announcement from the United States that it would start a process of examining its position on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples with a view to its endorsement. A similar statement had been made by Canada in March.

² An overview of the timeline of the renovation is available here...

<http://www.un.org/cmp/uncmp/docs/Accelerated%20Strategy%20IV%20Scope%20through%20time%20April%202010.pdf>

Human rights

Human rights continue to be a major issue at each Forum session and this year was no exception. The Forum held a dialogue with James Anaya, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples as well as Janine Lasimbang, the Chairperson of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. During this dialogue Mr. Anaya and Ms. Lasimbang discussed the work of their respective mandates over the past year. Mr Anaya also emphasized the importance indigenous peoples' self determination in relation to the theme of development with culture and identity.



Pita Sharples, Minister of Maori Affairs of New Zealand announcing support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Permanent Forum also conducted dialogues with the Governments of Bolivia and Paraguay. The dialogues were a follow-up to the recommendations that the Permanent Forum made following its 2009 visit to the Chaco region of the two countries, to investigate allegations of forced labour and servitude of the Guaraní people. The dialogue with the two Governments, in which representatives of indigenous peoples and the UN system participated, was fruitful and resulted in a number of recommendations by the Forum on how to address the serious situation of indigenous people impacted by forced labour practices in the Chaco region. This

is the first time the Permanent Forum has held such an in-depth dialogue with Governments.



Traditional Chief of the Onondaga Nation, Todadaho Sid Hill addresses the Ninth Session

Half day session on indigenous peoples and forests

A panel was held composed of Permanent Forum members, the Director of the Secretariat of the UN Forum on Forests, indigenous experts and the representative of Brazil. Amongst the issues raised were that conservation initiatives frequently lead to the displacement of indigenous communities, due to the misconception that the only way to conserve forests is to remove all humans from the forests. Indigenous peoples' sustainable management of their forests was also discussed, as well as the need for governments to recognise indigenous peoples' right to manage their own lands. The Forum adopted some general recommendations on forests and indigenous peoples that will be submitted to the UN Forum on Forests in early 2011. The year 2011 is the International Year of Forests. Given the importance of forests for indigenous peoples, the Forum decided to hold an international expert meeting next January on this topic.

The report of the Ninth Session will be available in all six UN languages in late

June on the UNPFII website.³ The tenth session will take place in New York at UN Headquarters on 16-27 May 2011.

The Bureau of the Permanent Forum

This year's pre-session meeting of the Permanent Forum took place on 17-18 March by Lake Titicaca and in the city of La Paz, at the invitation of the Bolivian government. The annual pre-session meetings allow the members of the Permanent Forum to prepare for the annual sessions of the Permanent Forum.

The Bureau of the Permanent Forum is composed of the following members:

Chair: Carlos Mamani Condori
Rapporteur: Paimaneh Hasteh
Vice Chairs: Bartolome Clavero
Mick Dodson
Hassan Id Balkassm
Tonya Gonella Frichner



Carlos Mamani, Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

³ Once the report is ready, it will be available on the Ninth session page, here...

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



**International Expert Group Meeting:
Indigenous Children and Youth in
Detention, Custody, Foster-Care and
Adoption**

4-5 March 2010

*Tsleil Waututh Community Centre, North
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*

The meeting, sponsored by the First Nations Summit and the Interim First Nations Child and Family Wellness Council and co-sponsored by the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, focused on indigenous children and youth in state custody. Participants of the meeting explored contemporary removal of indigenous children from families and communities as a result of past government policies to promote assimilation, including policies on boarding and residential schools. They also looked at the vastly disproportionate rates of indigenous children and youth currently incarcerated or under punitive detention; as well as the disproportionate numbers of indigenous children in foster care and adoption programs. The meeting made a number of recommendations to the Permanent Forum, the UN system and Governments. The full list of the recommendations is contained in the report of the meeting, which was submitted to the ninth session of the Permanent Forum in April 2010.⁴

**International Expert Group Meeting
Indigenous Peoples: Development with
Culture and Identity: Articles 3 and 32
of the United Nations Declaration on the
Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Organized by SPFII, the aim of the meeting was to analyze enshrined human rights within international standards and policies

⁴ The Report of the EGM on Indigenous Children and Youth in Detention, Custody, Foster-Care and Adoption is available online here:
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/E%20C.19%202010%20CRP.8%20.doc>

and how these contribute to indigenous peoples' concept of development with culture and identity. The expert group meeting also drew attention to the various development concepts and practices and their impact on indigenous peoples' livelihoods, communities, cultural practices, lands and natural resources. It also identified options and further plans to build the necessary conditions for development such as empowering and strengthening indigenous peoples' organizations and governance systems. The results and recommendations of the EGM are contained in the report of the meeting which was submitted to the Ninth Session of the Permanent Forum.⁵



Carlos Mamani, Margaret Lokawua, Paimaneh Hasteh, Tonya Gonella Frichner and Michael Dodson, members of the Permanent Forum

**Visit of Members of the Permanent
Forum to Colombia**

6-9 July, 2010

During the ninth session of the Permanent Forum on, the Government of Colombia announced that it would invite Members of the Permanent Forum to visit Colombia. On 10 May 2010, the President of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Mr. Carlos Mamani, received a formal

⁵ The report of the meeting, as well as the other documents of the meeting are available on the UNPFII website here:
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/EGM_DCI.html



letter extending an invitation to the Permanent Forum to observe the situation of the indigenous peoples in Colombia in general, with a particular focus on the situation of the Awa peoples. On the basis of this invitation, members of the Permanent Forum will undertake a mission to Colombia in July 2010.

Third Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

12-16 July, Geneva

The third session of EMRIP will include a presentation by the Expert Mechanism of the draft progress report on the study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision-making. The third session will also focus on good practices that highlight how the Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples can be used to promote the rights of indigenous peoples. Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur will hold individual meetings with representatives of indigenous peoples and organizations. More information is available on the Expert Mechanism page here:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/ExpertMechanism/3rd/index.htm>

Elections of Permanent Forum members for the term 2011-2013

On April 28 the Economic and Social Council held elections for its subsidiary bodies, including the Permanent Forum. On that occasion, the Council elected 8 members nominated by governments and the President of Ecosoc announced his appointment of 8 members nominated by indigenous peoples' organizations.

The following individuals will be members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for the term 2011-2013:

Alvaro Esteban Pop	Guatemala
Anna Naikanchina	Russian Federation
Andrei Nikiforov	Russian Federation

Dalee Sambo Dorrough	United States
Edward John	Canada
Eva Biaudet	Finland
Helen Kaljulante	Estonia
Megan Davis	Australia
Mirian Masaquiza	Ecuador
Mirna Cunningham	Nicaragua
Paimaneh Hasteh	Iran
Paul Kanyinke Sena	Kenya
Raja Devashish Roy	Bangladesh
Saul Vicente Vazquez	Mexico
Simon W. M'Viboudoulou	Congo
Valmaine Toki	New Zealand

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).

The staff members are:

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Comings and goings at the Secretariat

Talei Cama and Xinxin Cai have recently left and SPFII thanks them for their commitment and hard work. Arturo Requesens joined SPFII just before the ninth session. Furthermore, Elsa Stamatopoulou has announced that she will be leaving the UN at the end of July 2010. Hopefully there will be more news about arrivals, rather than departures in the next issue of the Message Stick.

