

THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE

Press release

Annual Forum to highlight progress and challenges ten years after UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

UNITED NATIONS, 19 April 2017 – More than 1,000 indigenous participants from all over the world will be at United Nations Headquarters from 24 April to 5 May to attend the sixteenth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is an advisory body of the Economic and Social Council tasked to discuss indigenous issues relating to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. The main theme of this year's session will be the tenth anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the most comprehensive international instrument on indigenous peoples' rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 September 2007. The landmark document embodies global consensus on the rights of indigenous peoples, including the rights to self-determination, traditional lands, territories and resources, education, culture, health, and development.

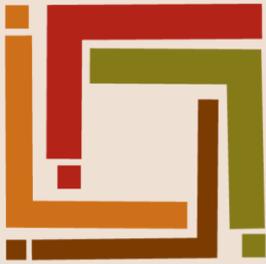
"The Declaration has improved the lives of indigenous peoples, and we have had some major advances since its adoption," said Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine, the incoming Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. "Some countries have taken constitutional and legislative measures to recognize the rights and identity of indigenous peoples, yet, we also continue to witness displacement, development aggression and systemic violence - in particular against indigenous women and youth," she stated. "We must take concrete action to implement the Declaration as the minimum standard for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world."

A high-level event on the 10th anniversary of the UN Declaration, convened by the President of the 71st session of the General Assembly, will take place on Tuesday, 25 April, in the General Assembly Hall, providing a key opportunity for Member States, UN entities and indigenous representatives to highlight achievements and challenges in putting into effect the UN Declaration.

The Permanent Forum will also examine issues related to indigenous women and youth, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the follow-up to the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. Human rights and the issues faced by indigenous human rights defenders will feature prominently in the dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on Monday, 1 May.

The session will open on Monday, 24 April, at 11 a.m. in the General Assembly Hall, with a ceremonial welcome by the traditional Chief of the Onondaga Nation, Todadah Sid Hill. Secretary-General António Guterres (tbc); the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, H. E. Ambassador Cristián Barros Melet (Chile); the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Lenni Montiel; the Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Lakshmi Puri; and the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs of Canada, Honourable Carolyn Bennett will address the opening.





THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE

Side events

More than 100 side events are expected to take place during the two-week session, organized by indigenous peoples' organizations, UN Member States, UN entities, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders. For a full list of side events, please see bit.ly/UNPFII16.

Cultural event

A cultural event with a performance by K'ala Maka, an Aymara musical group from Bolivia presenting contemporary music with traditional rhythms, will take place on Tuesday, 25 April, starting at 6:30 p.m. in the Visitors' Lobby of the United Nations.

Background

Globally, indigenous peoples make up less than 5 per cent of the world's population, but account for 15 per cent of the poorest. They live across 90 countries, represent 5,000 different cultures and speak an overwhelming majority of the world's estimated 7,000 languages.

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2000. The Forum provides expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the UN System through ECOSOC; raises awareness and promotes the integration and coordination of relevant activities within the UN System; and disseminates information on indigenous issues.

The Permanent Forum is comprised of 16 independent experts, functioning in their personal capacity. ECOSOC appoints the members, eight of whom are nominated by governments and eight by indigenous organizations from the different regions of the world. The Forum has gained increasing recognition and impact as the global platform for dialogue, cooperation and concrete action on indigenous peoples, with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the fundamental framework.

Press conferences are scheduled on 24 April, 27 April and 1 May at 1:15 p.m., and on 5 May at 11:15 a.m. in room S-237 at UN Headquarters. The press conferences and all official sessions (not side events) will be **webcast live** at webtv.un.org.

Journalists without United Nations press accreditation should seek accreditation through the Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit: www.un.org/en/media/accreditation or +1 212-963-6934.

Indigenous Media Zone: For the first time, there will be an Indigenous Media Zone from 24-28 April, providing a space for indigenous community media to cover the Permanent Forum. The programme will be available at bit.ly/UNPFII16

For media queries, including interviews, please contact Martina Donlon, tel: +1 212-963-6816 or email: donlon@un.org – United Nations Department of Public Information

To contact the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, please contact Ms. Julia Raavad, tel: +1 212-963-5873 or email: raavad@un.org – UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

For more information on the sixteenth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, please see: bit.ly/UNPFII16

Published by the UN Department of Public Information

