

UNIC activities on indigenous issues in 2011

UNIC Brazzaville provided UN Radio with coverage of the International Forum on the Indigenous People in Central Africa, which was held from 16 to 21 March 2011 in the Northern part of the Republic of Congo. This coverage was aired and posted on the UN Radio site.

In its radio programme co-produced by Radio Télévision Nationale du Burundi, **UNIC Bujumbura** broadcast a story on extraction of natural resources and other major development projects in or near the territories of indigenous peoples as one of the most significant sources of abuse of their human rights worldwide.

In February 2011, during the visit of UN Youth Champion Monique Coleman in Australia, **UNIC Canberra** organized the following activities in connection with indigenous groups:

- Visit to an after-school programme at Redfern Community Centre, a low socio-economic area in Sydney with a high indigenous population. About 200 children attended the talk with Ms. Coleman.
- Event to support indigenous lawyers in New South Wales together with the New South Wales Bar Association. Ms. Coleman met with young Indigenous law students and also with the Inaugural Indigenous Lawyer of the year, and discussed challenges that young indigenous students face. About 60 members attended.
- Visit to Alice Springs, which is in the Northern Territory and the red centre of Australia. UNIC Canberra worked with the Northern Territory Department of Education to organize visits mostly to government schools with high indigenous populations. The first school Ms. Coleman visited was the Centralian Middle School where a lot of significant work is being done to try and keep indigenous students enrolled through their middle year school years. About 300 students were present.
- Visit to about 300 young indigenous journalism interns, as requested by the National Indigenous Radio Service. Also, arranged an interview of Mr. Coleman with the radio station.
- Visit to Bradshaw School, which is 75% indigenous and features the Irrkerlantye Learning Unit and Indigenous Wing that offers good facilities for disadvantaged students. The Unit is so successful that for two years in a row it has recorded a student who sits in the top 20% of Australians' best for writing and literacy.
- Street soccer games for indigenous youth from the town camps arranged with Tangentyere Youth Services, where Ms. Coleman was invited to join. She gave a talk to the young people and also participated in the Tangentyere drumming troupe performance. About 120 people attended.
- Visit to Yirra Boarding School for indigenous youth from the Northern Territory and Queensland.

Between 20 and 23 May 2011, during the visit of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to Australia, **UNIC Canberra** organized an indigenous roundtable meeting at Charles Darwin University in Darwin co-organized by the NGO Concerned Australians, a visit to the Yarrabah indigenous community in Queensland in partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission, and liaised with the Federal Government to organize an indigenous roundtable in Canberra.

UNIC Jakarta held a film screening and a panel discussion titled "Indigenous Design: celebrating stories and cultures, crafting their own future" at Goethe Institute Jakarta on the observance of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People. About 75 people attended.

UNIC La Paz supported OHCHR in coordinating a press conference for the International Day of the World's Indigenous People. The Ombudsman, UN Resident Coordinator Yoriko Yasukawa and the UNHCHR Resident Representative Denis Racicot explained the importance of the Day especially in Bolivia. UNIC was also responsible for drafting and sending to the media the press release about the violent confrontation that occurred between Bolivian police and indigenous peoples from the Isiboro Sécure Indigenous Territory (TIPNIS) who had been marching in protest against the construction of a highway through the heart of their Amazonian reserve. The UN called for dialogue and peace between Government and indigenous leaders. The Newspapers La Razon, Los Tiempos, and El Deber published the press release.

UNIC Lima provided support and information materials to schools belonging to the Friends of the UN Club. Members of the Friends of the UN Club from the Lord of Sipan University, in Lambayeque, carried out activities to mark the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. In that respect, they organized workshops for children and adolescents in zones of Peru where there are indigenous populations, such as Kañaris, Incahuasi and La Viña. The topics of the workshops were on reproductive health, illnesses in minors, promotion of healthy living, improvement of family and peer communication and sexual orientation for adolescents.

UNIC Manama posted the following tweet messages on its twitter page: (1) On UN Indigenous People's Day 09AUG UN Chief Urges World to Address Challenges Faced by Indigenous Peoples http://www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday/message_sg.shtml. (2) UN Indigenous People's Day 09AUG-See a 30min film on Crafts Kalimantan Network formed in Kalimantan, Indonesia <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPPMO7i3ywU>. The Centre also disseminated the Secretary-General's message on the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples in English & Arabic to all media in the region.

In observance of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, **UNIC Moscow**, jointly with the Permanent Mission of the Komi Republic in Moscow, set up an exhibition of paintings of two Komi painters, V. Ignatov and N. Zhilin, which was opened on 11 August 2011 at the UNIC premises to an audience of government officials and NGO activists as well as the media and diplomatic corps. Following a brief introduction by the UNIC Officer-in-Charge, the exhibition was formally opened by the First Deputy President of the State Council of Komi Republic. The ceremony was then addressed by the Minister of Culture of the Komi Republic. The magnificent voice of Vera Bulysheva, a nationally renowned Komi musician who performed songs in Komi language added a genuine "native" touch. An "exhibit-within-the exhibit" – a selection of objects of arts and crafts by Komi craftsmen (items made of wood, fir, cloth, miniature paintings, etc.) was also organized.

In order to analyze the political, economic and cultural life of indigenous peoples in Panama, **UNIC Panama City**, in close partnership with the Inter-Technical Group of Indigenous Peoples, held a talk at UNIC premises on 14 February 2011. Representatives of ethnic Gnobe, Embera and Kuna participated and asked for more respect from United Nations agencies, saying they believed they deserved projects with higher social impact in their communities. After the indigenous presentations, a question-and-answer session followed. About 70 people attended.

On 9 August 2011, **UNIC Panama City** supported the UNFPA Country office on the visit of UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin. The Centre was dressed up in a

native village of Comarca Gnobé Bugle to show the three projects on sexual and reproductive health in indigenous areas of the Republic of Panama that UNFPA is working on. UNIC also set up an exhibit of handmade crafts by a group of Gnobé Bugle indigenous women. The initiative is part of the activities of the National Aid Programme, IFAD and the Gnobé Bugle Project. The local and international staff of the UN System in Panama supported the event by purchasing practically all the merchandise that they exhibited. It was a beautiful show full of cultural diversity.

UNIC Pretoria worked with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to host an information session on the Rights of Indigenous People. The UNHCHR focal point, Mr. Joram Useb, delivered a presentation which was followed by an open discussion.

UNO in Armenia screened the YouTube film, Ancestral Waters: Philippines Indigenous Groups Asserts Right to Sea and Lakes @ www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday/videos.shtml to visiting groups of students in the UN House Lobby.

UNO in Kazakhstan organized the presentation of the documentary film, Kalimantan's Craft; Harmony of Culture and Nature, dedicated to the International Day of the World's Indigenous People. Participants appreciated the discussion related to the actual problems of indigenous people around the world.

Some centres translated the Secretary-General's message on the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples into local languages, such as Danish, Icelandic, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish by **UNRIC Brussels**, Farsi by **UNIC Tehran**, and Polish by **UNIC Warsaw**.

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