



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES INDIGENOUS VOICES

PRESS RELEASE

Indigenous Peoples seek action on good governance and Asia at UN gathering

UNITED NATIONS, 12 May 2014 – Around 1,500 indigenous participants from all regions of the world are expected to attend the thirteenth session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at UN Headquarters in New York from 12 to 23 May. Members of the Permanent Forum will engage with indigenous peoples, UN Member States, and UN agencies in advancing the rights of indigenous peoples.

Principles of good governance will be at the forefront of the discussions. “Respect and protection for human rights are key principles essential for good governance”, said Dalee Sambo Dorough, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. “Therefore, good governance must be consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which affirms the distinct status and human rights of indigenous peoples.”

The regional focus will be on the situation of indigenous peoples in the Asian region. According to Dr. Sambo Dorough, “Indigenous peoples in Asia are among the most discriminated against and are economically, socially and politically marginalized.” Other challenges include dispossession of indigenous lands, displacement, and competition for natural resources. “It is time that the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples is effectively implemented in order to address the negative impacts of militarization and economic liberalization on the territories of indigenous peoples, in Asia and across the globe,” said Dr. Dorough.

Participants will engage in a comprehensive dialogue with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in order to review the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Permanent Forum. Discussions will also address preparations for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, to be held in September 2014, and the ongoing definition of a post-2015 development agenda to succeed the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

As every year, there will be a whole day dedicated to human rights, including dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, James Anaya, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as with the Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and other human rights mechanisms.

The two-week session opens today, Monday, 12 May, at 11 a.m. in the General Assembly Hall (North Lawn Building), with statements by the Secretary-General, the President of the 68th session of the General Assembly, the President of the Economic and Social Council, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, preceded by a traditional welcome by the Chief of the Onondaga Nation, Todadaho Sid Hill.



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Side Events

More than 60 side events are expected to take place during the two-week session, organized by UN Member States, UN entities, other intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum and other stakeholders. A number of events will focus on good governance. Several training sessions will take place, including on global leadership for indigenous women, effective and meaningful participation in the Permanent Forum, and on special procedures dealing with human rights violations. Issues related to extractive industries on indigenous lands and territories, climate change, natural resources and indigenous peoples' sexual health and reproductive rights also remain in the spotlight. For a full list of side events, please see <http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/UNPFIIISessions/Thirteenth/SideEvents.aspx>.

A cultural event with indigenous musicians and dancers from around the world will be held on Tuesday evening, 13 May, starting at 6:15 p.m. on the second floor of the North Lawn Building of the United Nations. An Indigenous Arts Marketplace will take place on Friday, 16 May, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Church Center for the UN (777 UN Plaza, 2nd floor).

Background

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in July 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 outcome of the Forum's thirteenth session is expected to be an ECOSOC report, including draft decisions recommended for adoption by the Council.

For the second year in a row, the meeting will go "PaperSmart". In the interest of reducing the UN's carbon footprint, information will be available in various digital formats -- through an e-Portal -- with print-on-demand services in meetings rooms.

Press conferences are scheduled on 12 May, 1:30 pm, 15 May, 1:30 pm, 19 May, 1:30 pm, 22 May, 2:00 pm in the Press Briefing Room S-237 at UN Headquarters. The press conferences as well as all official sessions (not side events) will be **webcast live** at webtv.un.org

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For more information on the thirteenth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, please see: <http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples.aspx>