

UN Department of Public Information's response to the questionnaire regarding written contributions to the UNPFII

- 1. Given the Permanent Forum's decision that the eighth session will include follow-up to recommendations on:**
 - a. Economic and Social Development**
 - b. Indigenous Women**
 - c. Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People**

Please include information on how your agency is dealing with these important issues and the regional areas that are specific to your agency's work.

The main function of the Department of Public Information (DPI) is to provide information on the work of the United Nations to a diverse range of audiences world-wide using various media, thus helping to fulfill the substantive purposes of the Organization. The Department does not implement substantive programmes. With respect to the above topics, DPI's role is to inform audiences –from students, to civil society, to the media and general public – of the issues faced by indigenous peoples and of the mechanisms in place to assist them.

With respect to **economic and social development and indigenous women**, the Department has produced information materials (written, audiovisual and online) and assisted with the promotion and organization of events on issues such as urban migration, indigenous peoples and climate change, indigenous women, indigenous youth, indigenous languages, indigenous rights to lands, territories and natural resources, and reconciliation between indigenous peoples and States. Materials have included fact sheets, brochures, radio pieces, news interviews and TV features, which have been disseminated to journalists, non-governmental organizations, students and members of the general public, at UN Headquarters and via DPI's network of field offices, during sessions of the Permanent Forum, for International Days and throughout the year. Seven TV features were produced by UNTV in 2008 and distributed to broadcasters around the world. Topics covered were land rights of the Guarani in Bolivia, Aymara indigenous people and potato production in Peru, ancestral waters in the Philippines, protection of Amazonian rain forests in Brazil, Mayan construction reducing hurricane disaster-risk in Mexico, reindeer people maintaining their culture and language in Mongolia and maternal health in Ecuador.

DPI provided assistance to the UNPFII Secretariat with the organization and promotion of the annual event for the International Day of the World's Indigenous People, which in 2008 highlighted reconciliation between indigenous peoples and States. DPI facilitated the screening of the film *The Apology* on the Australian government's formal apology to those indigenous people who were part of the "Stolen Generations."

For the annual session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which in 2008 focused on climate change, DPI published a press kit containing several fact sheets on the themes under discussion. During the Forum, two press releases and three media advisories were issued, all of which were shared with UN correspondents, as well as through DPI's network of field offices and posted on the PFII web site. During the Forum, DPI organized three press conferences and facilitated interviews for media outlets, which resulted in a significant amount of coverage.

Notable coverage included an interview on the PBS “Democracy Now” programme, recorded interviews for the Public Radio International “Living on Earth” programme, a story on the BBC and syndicated articles by Reuters and AP. There was intense interest from Canadian and Australian newspapers and broadcasters, two countries with large indigenous populations.

In addition to activities at UNHQ, DPI has field offices in all seven UNPFII regions. Information centres in regions/countries with large indigenous populations are generally more engaged in activities and outreach on indigenous issues. Activities conducted by the Department’s field offices primarily involved the translation into non-official languages and dissemination of information materials, including the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. For example, for the International Day of the World’s Indigenous People, the message of the Secretary-General was translated into Azerbaijani, Kirundi, Turkish, Greek, Portuguese and other European languages. The UN Information Centre in Mexico City is currently involved in a project to translate and disseminate the Declaration into indigenous languages, and UNIC Rio produced a Portuguese version of the Declaration, as well as a “Frequently Asked Questions” fact sheet about the Declaration in 2008. Other activities for the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples in 2008 included an exhibition in Brazzaville, Congo, a press conference with UN and indigenous representatives in Bogota, Colombia, and the development of a special webpage by the UN Information Centre in Lima, Peru.

Many of the above activities have been carried out and promoted in the context of the **Second International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People**. In addition, to mark the beginning of the Decade, the Department produced an attractive poster with a design by an indigenous artist in all official UN languages, which was distributed worldwide through DPI field offices. New publications in the context of the Decade, such as a brochure aimed at indigenous youth, a new edition of the booklet explaining the Permanent Forum and a booklet containing the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, have been produced and disseminated by the Department.

2. Outline the obstacles your agency faces in implementing the Permanent Forum’s recommendations, including those addressed specifically to your agency.

The main obstacle in implementing the Forum’s recommendations addressed to the Department specifically (including wide distribution of press releases and dissemination of information on indigenous peoples and their issues) is limited financial resources. With additional resources, more documents could, for example, be translated and printed in all UN official languages as well as in indigenous languages, and outreach activities could be enhanced. Given these budgetary constraints, and the many UN priority issues which require the attention of the Department, it is important to place indigenous issues within the broader UN priorities in order to give them the required attention and resources.

3. **Outline the facilitating factors that enable your agency to implement the Permanent Forum's recommendations, including those addressed specifically to your agency.**

DPI has benefited from a positive and productive relationship with the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which has greatly facilitated the work of producing and disseminating information materials on indigenous themes.

4. **Given the Forum's recommendation for the adoption of policies on indigenous peoples' issues, please specify whether your agency:**
 - a. **has a policy or other similar tool on indigenous peoples' issues?** N/A
 - b. **has recent programmes on indigenous peoples' issues?** N/A
 - c. **has budgetary allocations on indigenous peoples' issues?** Yes, for translation and production of information materials, funds are allocated from the larger Strategic Communication Division's human rights budget. For other activities, no specific budget is allocated.
 - d. **has projects/activities on indigenous peoples' issues?** Yes, examples as mentioned above include the production of printed information materials, online, radio and TV news and feature productions, organization of events, press conferences, exhibitions etc.

(In order to facilitate the quantification of data by the Forum, please indicate the number of programmes and projects/activities devoted to indigenous peoples issues in the past year)

Press conferences at UNHQ: 3

Public Information materials produced: 26

5 fact sheets/backgrounders

20 press releases and media advisories issued during the Permanent Forum session, for the International Day and during the deliberations of the Third Committee of the General Assembly.

1 design and printing of Declaration booklet

Events organized/promoted at UNHQ or in the field: 4

Radio/TV programmes: 9 Radio and 7 TV programmes

5. **Outline whether your agency has regular or ad hoc capacity-building programmes on indigenous peoples' issues for staff, or a plan for capacity-building activities in this area, at headquarters or in the field?** N/A

6. **Does your agency have a focal point on indigenous issues? If so, please provide the name and contact information of this person.**

Ms. Renata Sivacolundhu
Strategic Communications Division
UN Department of Public Information
Room S-994AA
New York NY 10017
Tel: +1 212-963-32932
E-mail: sivacolundhu@un.org

7. **Please provide a list of conferences and other meetings under your agency regarding indigenous issues in the current year as well as next year.** A DPI/NGO briefing was held on “Climate Change and its Impact on Indigenous Peoples” in March 2008. A similar briefing on a topic concerning indigenous issues will be scheduled during the fall of 2009.