



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES INDIGENOUS VOICES

MEDIA ADVISORY

Indigenous Youth

International Expert Group Meeting

29 - 31 January 2013, UN Headquarters, New York

The United Nations will hold the first international expert group meeting on indigenous youth, from 29 to 31 January 2013 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The theme is “Indigenous youth: identity, challenges and hope: articles 14, 17, 21 and 25 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”.

Seven indigenous youth experts from around the world will be here for the meeting and are available for interviews:

Mr. Niwamanya Rodgers Matuna is a Muwa from the Batwa hunters and gatherers peoples in western Uganda. He has worked with a number of organizations in advocating for indigenous people’s right to health, and has carried out community-based health sensitization on family planning, clean water, and infectious diseases. He has partnered with government officials in order to advocate for the rights of indigenous Batwa, and has represented Batwa youth in various meetings at the national level. (*Languages: English, French*)

Mr. Steven Brown belongs to the Bundjalung and Yuin Nation Tribes from New South Wales (Australia). In 2004, Steven commenced working in the Australian public service; he has been a member of the National Indigenous Youth Leadership Group that provided advice to the Australian Government from 2005 to 2006; most recently he participated in the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education in Peru (2011). Steven has worked in the philanthropic sector for the Foundation for Young Australians to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In 2012, Steven participated in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York, where he addressed the importance of protecting the rights of Indigenous Children and Youth. (*Language: English*)

Ms. Andrea Landry is currently attaining her Masters in Communications and Social Justice at the University of Windsor (Canada). She has been engaged in advocacy within the indigenous community on a local, provincial, national and international level. She is currently the Youth Executive for the National Association of Friendship Centre. She has also been



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discussing political engagement strategies with Canadian authorities to create better lives for aboriginal people living in Canada. She took part in UN events such as the International Day of Peace and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Andrea is also a key organizer of the Idle No More national events, an indigenous movement on the rise. She is also the holder of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Award. *(Language: English)*

Mr. Meenakshi Munda is currently President of Asia Pacific Indigenous Youth Network (APIYN), Baguio City, Philippines. *(Language: English)*

Mr. Igor Yando is a young indigenous person from the Yamal region in the Russian Federation. With a background as a teacher in his own community, Igor is currently working in a youth centre in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous district, with the aim of organizing temporary employment opportunities for youth. He is also involved in the Yamal-region television to produce information and audiovisual materials for his community. *(Language: Russian)*

Mr. Tuomas Aslak Juuso has been active in the National Finnish Sámi Youths (SSN) organization since the year 2003 and currently is the president of the organization. In 2008 he was selected as the youngest member ever to the Sámi parliament of Finland. He led the planning work of the youth council of the parliament. He has also been active on youth issues on the international level as in 2012 he was selected as a co-chair of the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (GIYC). In 2012 he was also selected as a youth representative to the Global Coordinating Group in charge of consultations for the United Nations World Conference of the Indigenous Peoples. *(Language: English)*

Ms. Tania Edith Pariona Tarqui is Quechua from the region of Ayacucho in Peru. She has extensive experience in human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples. She took part in a programme on human rights for indigenous leaders as well as a programme on Human Rights, Indigenous Peoples and the UN system offered by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Since 2004, she further strengthened her leadership skills as a young indigenous woman, including by attending the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues from 2010 to 2012 as a representative of the Youth Caucus. Tania is currently member of a number of local, regional and international organizations, where she is a strong advocate for the rights of indigenous youth and women. *(Language: Spanish)*

BACKGROUND:

With some 370 million indigenous people in the world, there are approximately 67 million indigenous youth globally. In many countries, indigenous youth have low school enrolment, high dropout rates and lag behind other groups in terms of academic achievement. High illiteracy rates are a direct result of educational exclusion in the form of poor access, low funding, and culturally and linguistically inadequate education.





Indigenous youth tend to experience higher unemployment rates and lower incomes compared to non-indigenous youth workers, due to a range of factors such as geographic disadvantages, lower education and training levels, discrimination, and labour market discouragement.

The pressure to leave their communities in search of employment and education opportunities, paralleled by the desire to stay in their communities, present serious challenges to indigenous youth's identity. Life in urban areas, away from the community, makes indigenous youth vulnerable to abusive labour practices. Young indigenous women often face multiple forms of discrimination due to their indigenous identity and their gender.

Geographic and cultural isolation limit many indigenous youth's access to health and prevention services, including those concerned with HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. Mental health represents an urgent priority. Where data is available, it has been demonstrated that indigenous youth suicide rates are significantly higher than rates among their non-indigenous peers.

The Expert Group Meeting will analyze how international human rights standards and policies could be more responsive to advancing the rights of indigenous youth. The meeting also represents an opportunity to exchange information on the social and economic conditions of indigenous youth, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health, and social security, among others. It will help to identify options and possible strategies to protect the economic and social rights of indigenous youth, such as empowering and strengthening indigenous youth organizations. The final report and recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting will be submitted to the twelfth session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in May 2013.

To schedule an interview, please contact Ms. Martina Donlon, tel: +1 212-963-6816 or email: donlon@un.org – United Nations Department of Public Information

To contact the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, please get in touch with Ms. Nilla Bernardi, tel: +1 212-963-8379 or email: bernardi@un.org – UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

For more information on the Expert Group Meeting, please see:
<http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples.aspx>

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