

## **WFP's Contribution to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)**

The World Food Programme's (WFP) assistance is based on food insecurity and not strictly on the social status of an individual. As such, WFP does not have specific programmes for Indigenous People, unless they are food insecure. Nevertheless, some of WFP's programmes have included Indigenous People due to their food security status.

WFP is aware that Indigenous People in Latin America often have no access to healthcare and face a greater chance of undernutrition and more likelihood of infant mortality as compared with non-Indigenous Peoples.

The 1963 UN Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the 1989 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO No. 169) and the 1994 UN proclamation that 1995-2004 be the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples form the constitutional backdrop of UN and thus WFP's commitment to supporting the rights of Indigenous Peoples. WFP also welcomed the September 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was effected after more than 20 years of negotiation.

In October 2008, WFP was part of an inter-agency group of Regional Directors that prepared a seminar on the Declaration on Indigenous Rights for South American countries. The seminar assembled over 70 participants from various indigenous groups, human rights institutions and governments from 10 South American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela). The seminar offered these indigenous groups the opportunity to exchange their experiences, good practices and voice their recommendations for implementing the Declaration. The participants examined in detail the Declaration and its background, including the ILO Convention No. 69 on Indigenous and Tribal People. Participants identified key challenges and developed clear action points to implement the Declaration and realize the rights included therein. The indigenous participants recognized the Declaration as an international instrument. They urged Latin American Governments to diffuse information on Indigenous Peoples' rights, initiate the process of collaboration and dialogue with Indigenous People and develop public policy to implement the relevant international instruments.

In its operations, WFP has succeeded in reaching indigenous beneficiaries widely in countries with a high proportion of indigenous population, such as Bolivia, Guatemala and Peru. Between 2007 and 2008, WFP projects reached a total of over 220,000 indigenous beneficiaries in Peru, some 75 percent of total beneficiaries, while in Bolivia WFP's indigenous beneficiaries totalled over 570,000, some 80 percent of that country's total beneficiaries.

WFP has made a number of concrete recommendations to overcome indigenous inequality and exclusion. These include recommendations to:

- enable indigenous young children and pregnant and lactating women to meet their special nutritional and health needs;
- to help indigenous poor families to gain and preserve assets;
- to enable indigenous households which depend on degraded natural resources for their food security to make a shift to more sustainable livelihoods;
- and to mitigate the effects of natural disasters in vulnerable areas where indigenous populations are concentrated.

WFP will be involved in numerous information-sharing meetings with representatives of Indigenous Peoples throughout 2009:

- From 30 March to 3 April, WFP will deliver three presentations at a ‘training of trainers’ conference on the “Right to food” in the context of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants population. The WFP’s Regional Director will attend.
- WFP will attend and contribute to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UPFII), taking place at the UN Secretariat in New York from 18 to 29 May.
- WFP will be involved in organizing the Seminar on the Declaration on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights for Central American countries, planned for 8 to 12 June.
- WFP will attend a meeting with UN Country Teams of Central America to analyze and plan the implementation of the UN Development Group Guidance on the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, planned to take place in June after the Seminar.
- Finally WFP will be working in a UN Interagency Consultative Group on Indigenous Issues.