



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

9 April 2018

Excellency,

Further to my letter dated 15 February 2018, I have the honour to share with you the Concept Note and Program of the Informal Interactive Hearings with Indigenous Peoples to be held at 3:00 p.m, on Tuesday, 17 April 2018 in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

Please, Excellency, accept the assurance of my highest consideration



Miroslav Lajčák

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

CONCEPT NOTE

Informal Interactive Hearing with Indigenous Peoples 17 April 2018 @ 3:00 PM

Pursuant to paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 71/321, the President of the General Assembly will organize an informal interactive hearing with indigenous peoples on the margins of the seventeenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on Tuesday, 17 April 2018. The event will take place in the Trusteeship Council Chamber from 3:00pm-6:00pm. The main purpose of the event is to reflect on possible further measures necessary to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in relevant United Nations meetings on issues affecting them. The meeting will also inform the intergovernmental process of the General Assembly that will resume at its seventy-fifth session.

Background

In September 2007, the General Assembly, through its resolution 61/295, adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration establishes a comprehensive framework of minimum standards for economic, social and cultural well-being and rights of the world's indigenous peoples.

In September 2014, the General Assembly held the high-level plenary meeting known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and reaffirmed its commitments to consult and cooperate in good faith with indigenous peoples through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent, before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them, in accordance with the applicable principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In December 2016, the General Assembly (A/RES/70/232) requested the President of the General Assembly to conduct "timely, inclusive, representative and transparent consultations with Member States, indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions from all regions of the world, and existing relevant mechanisms of the United Nations, on the possible measures necessary, including procedural and institutional steps and selection criteria, to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them, and also requested the President to prepare a compilation of the views presented during the consultations, including good practices within the United Nations regarding indigenous peoples' participation, which will form the basis for a draft text to be finalized and adopted by the Assembly during its seventy-first session".

On 7 March 2016, the President of the General Assembly at its 70th session began the consultation process to enable the participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations and produced a draft text containing views expressed by Member States and indigenous peoples, which served as the basis for discussion and negotiation in the 71st session. Compilation of the views presented during the consultations, including good practices within the United Nations regarding indigenous peoples' participation was circulated by the President of the General Assembly and subsequently issued as General Assembly Document A/70/990.

Building on the work of the 70th session, the President on the General Assembly at its 71st session further consulted with Member States and indigenous peoples before starting the intergovernmental negotiation in May 2017, which culminated with the adoption of resolution 71/321.

Resolution 71/321 entitled “Enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples’ representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them” requested the President of the General Assembly to “organize and preside over informal interactive hearings and to prepare a summary of each hearing, during its seventy-second, seventy-third and seventy-fourth sessions, on the margins of the sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, with indigenous peoples, ensuring, to the extent possible, balanced regional representation”. In addition, the President of the General Assembly in his letter dated 11 September 2017, circulated a comprehensive summary of the consultation process on possible measures to enable the participation of Indigenous peoples’ representatives and institutions at relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them.

The seventeenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is scheduled to take place from 16 to 27 April 2018 at the UN Headquarters in New York under the special theme: “**Indigenous peoples’ collective rights to lands, territories and resources**”. In this connection, the President of the General Assembly has decided to convene the informal interactive hearing with indigenous peoples on 17 April 2018 to take advantage of the presence of indigenous peoples’ representatives from across the globe.

Objective

This will be the first of a series of three informal interactive hearings with indigenous peoples that will take place in 2018, 2019 and 2020 as part of the preparatory process for the consideration of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session on possible further measures necessary to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples’ representatives and institutions in relevant United Nations meetings on issues affecting them. The 2018 informal hearing will further provide an opportunity for indigenous peoples to express their views and make concrete proposals to enable their participation at United Nations.

Format

The informal interactive hearing will be convened by the President of the General Assembly on 17 April 2018, one day after the opening of the 17th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The event will consist of an opening segment and plenary meeting. In the opening the President of the General Assembly, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and the Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will deliver statements; followed by keynote addresses by Indigenous Peoples’ Representatives. After that, the floor will be open to participants. Intervention should not last more than 3 minutes. Member States and Permanent Observers are invited to attend and participate, as appropriate, in the informal interactive hearing.

Participants are expected to present creative and concrete proposals on the four main clusters discussed in the consultation and negotiation processes during the 70th and 71st sessions of the General Assembly, namely (i) venue of participation, (ii) participation modalities, (iii) selection criteria and selection (iv) mechanisms. During the informal interactive hearing, participants are encouraged to focus on the topic under discussion.

The draft provisional program will be made available in due course. Participants wishing to take the floor are invited to press the button on the desk.

Participants

The meeting is open to Member States, Permanent Observers and indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions from all regions of the world. Indigenous Peoples attending the 17th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues do not require additional accreditation to attend the informal interactive hearing.

Outcome

The President of the General Assembly will prepare a summary of the informal interactive hearing with indigenous peoples, which will inform the intergovernmental process that will resume during the 75th session of the General Assembly. The Summary will be circulated to all Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations and to indigenous peoples.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

First Informal Interactive Hearing with Indigenous Peoples

17 April 2018, 3:00 PM

Trusteeship Council Chamber

3:00AM - 3:20 PM

Opening Segment

- Statement by H.E. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly
- Statement by Mr. Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights
- Remarks by Ms. Miriam Walleet Aboubakeine, Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Key Note address:

- Key Note address by Mr. Chief Wilton Littlechild (Canada)
- Key Note address by Ms. Mirna Cunningham (Nicaragua)

3:20PM-6:00PM

List of speakers

- Member States and Indigenous Peoples Representatives / Interactive discussion