

THE MESSAGE STICK

Quarterly Newsletter of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

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During the meeting between SPFII and the UN Country Team in Bolivia, November 2007

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *MESSAGE STICK*¹, the newsletter that highlights the activities undertaken by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) as well as its Secretariat for the period from October to December 2007.

After the historic adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration), States, the UN System and the whole international community are discussing how to implement the UN Declaration to protect, respect and fulfil indigenous peoples' collective and individual human rights in each region and country.

In South America, Bolivia is the first country in the world that adopted the UN Declaration as national law. It is an important symbol of the beginning of the end of invisibility, marginalization and oppression. For many Bolivians, the Declaration represents a road map and an opportunity to place the issue of its implementation on the agenda of the first government to be presided by an indigenous person.

Within the same line, the UN Development Group adopted the UN Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, which also constitutes the commitment of the UN System.

Members of the UNPFII and its Secretariat had been invited to participate in different events by indigenous peoples' organizations, UN country offices, universities, among others, to share the implications of the UN Declaration.

We hope that you will find this edition of the Message Stick informative and useful and we look forward to receiving your feedback comments, questions, and suggestions at the following address: IndigenousPermanentForum@un.org

Secretariat of the UNPFII

¹ A Message Stick is a traditional Australian Aboriginal method of correspondence whereby runners would deliver messages carved in symbols on a piece of wood to inform other indigenous peoples of upcoming events.



MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Article on “Indigenous Peoples and the Millennium Development Goals”

Prepared by the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) summarize the development goals agreed on at international conferences and world summits during the 1990s. At the end of the last century, world leaders distilled the key goals and targets in the Millennium Declaration (September 2000). The Declaration reaffirms universal values of human rights, equality, mutual respect and shared responsibility for the conditions of all peoples and seeks to redress globalization's hugely unequal benefits and governments commit themselves to fulfilling their obligations by 2015.

The Millennium Declaration, approved by 147 Heads of State and Government, has provided an opportunity for a renewed focus on indigenous peoples in the international development debate. As the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues stated during its fourth session, “Indigenous peoples have the right to benefit from the Millennium Development Goals and from other goals and aspirations contained in the Millennium Declaration to the same extent as all others. Indigenous and tribal peoples are lagging behind other parts of the population in the achievement of the goals in most, if not all, the countries in which they live, and indigenous and tribal women commonly face additional gender-based disadvantages and discrimination.”²

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) has devoted a great deal of attention to the Millennium Development Goals. Its fourth session (2005) addressed MDG 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) and MDG 2 (achieve universal primary education) within the context of indigenous peoples' issues and its fifth session (2006) was devoted to the special theme “The Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: Redefining the Goals.” The Forum also monitors the implementation of the MDGs vis-à-vis indigenous peoples at its annual meeting.

The adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the General Assembly in September 2007, in particular, Articles 41 and 42 provides a crucial opportunity and call to action for states and the UN system to integrate indigenous visions of development into their work towards the achievement of the MDGs.

To read the complete article online, please visit <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/mdgs.html>

MEETINGS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNPFII AND ITS SECRETARIAT

Participation of Mr. Mick Dodson at the Pacific Regional Civil Society Organization Forum, 12-15 October 2007, Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

The representatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) of seventeen Pacific nations met in Tonga. Mr. Dodson member of the UNPFII attended the meeting called by Pacific Leaders to contribute to the improvement of the Pacific Plan. The participants welcomed the Policy on Consultative Status and Accreditation Between the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and Pacific Regional Non State Actors (PRNSAs). Civil society participants pointed out that understanding, support and input into the Pacific Plan is

integral and that its success can only be achieved if civil society's contributions are given active and serious consideration.

Participants called upon leaders to address relevant issues such as: economic growth, sustainable development, good governance, human security, self determination and women.

Regarding indigenous issues, the Plan (Nuku'alofa Communiqué) called for support and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007.

To read the Nuku'alofa Communiqué, please visit <http://www.oxfam.org.nz/imgs/whatwedo/mtf/cso%2007%20forum%20communiqué.pdf>

Participation of Ms. Ida Nicolaisen, Mr. Hassan Id Balkassm and Mr. Wilton Littlechild, members of the UNPFII, at the Informal Meeting on new mechanisms on Indigenous Peoples, 6-7 December 2007, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.

The Human Rights Council decided to request the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights to convene an informal meeting to exchange views on the most appropriate mechanisms to continue the work of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

The informal meeting to discuss a possible new mechanism for indigenous peoples met in Geneva on 6 December and the morning of 7 December, 2007

To read complete information, please visit <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/groups/groups-01.htm>

INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

Regional Meeting of the Advisory Group of Indigenous Leaders with the UN System in Latin America and the Caribbean, 5 - 6 November 2007, Quito, Ecuador

The Regional Meeting of the Advisory Group of Indigenous Leaders with the UN System in Latin America and the Caribbean held from 5 to 6 November in Quito, Ecuador, was jointly organized by UNICEF-LAC, OHCHR and SPFII. It was attended by more than 60 focal points of United Nations regional offices, indigenous members of the Advisory Group of UNICEF as Ms. Otilia Lux de Coti and indigenous authorities from Quito. SPFII participated actively in all discussions. Also, SPFII gave an interview to national newspaper (Diario El Hoy) in reference to its participation to the meeting.

During two days UN agencies, funds and programmes dialogued with indigenous representatives on the strategies to implement recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Declaration). As an outcome, recommendations were prepared to Resident Coordinators within the context of the Declaration, the UNDG draft guidelines on indigenous peoples' issues and the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People in order to integrate indigenous issues in the work of its agencies.

² UNPFII (2005), Report on the fourth session, E/C.19/2005/9.

SPFII met with President Evo Morales of Bolivia, the United Nations Country Team in Bolivia and the National Council for Dialogue between the Indigenous Organizations and the UN System in Bolivia, 8 - 9 November 2007, La Paz, Bolivia



Bolivian National Council for Dialogue and SPFII

In La Paz, Bolivia, on 8 and 9 of November various meetings were held. SPFII met with Directors of UN agencies, the UN Country Team (UNCT), the Working Group on Intercultural Issues (GTI) and the National Council for Dialogue composed by indigenous organizations and the UN System. Those meetings were organized by GTI. The aim of these meetings was to disseminate the work of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the meaning of the Declaration, implementation of UNPFII's recommendations and the Declaration, among other important issues related to indigenous peoples. Three press interviews were given by SPFII (Radio Erbol, EFE and Informa de Fondo Indigena). SPFII also met for a briefing the two new Members of the UNPFII from Bolivia (as of from 2008) Mr. Carlos Mamani and Ms. Elisa Canqui Mollo.

The meeting with President Evo Morales was held on 8 of November and was coordinated between SPFII and Mr. Sacha Llorenti, Vice-Minister of Presidency, Coordination with Social Movements and Civil Society.

SPFII congratulated H.E.'s Government for his leadership towards the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the promotion of its implementation. The recent adoption of a national law of Bolivia on the Declaration is a strong signal of the Government's commitment and a good example for others to follow.

President Morales explained the social programmes that his Government is promoting and he asked for cooperation to implement those programmes. SPFII announced the readiness of DESA to support with technical advice the implementation of Bolivia's National Development Plan. Later in the day, SPFII met with Mr. Noel Aguirre, Vice-Minister of Planning and Coordination, who explained the vision of "living well" and the urgency to develop indicators to measure the well-being of Bolivians. Also, DESA's offer was explained.

UNDG TASK TEAM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES / IASG

UNDG Task Team Meeting, 15 November 2007

The UNDG Task Team on Indigenous Issues met on 15 November and adopted the UNDG Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues. The Guidelines were presented to the UNDG Working Group on Programming

Policy (WGPP) on 29 November and were endorsed by the WGPP. They will be submitted for adoption to the UNDG Programme Group. The task team is currently drafting the Action Plan for the implementation of the Guidelines.

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Participation of SPFII at the Indigenous Peoples Conference in celebration of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 8 - 12 October 2007, La Paz, Bolivia.



President Evo Morales and Nobel Prize Rigoberta Menchu in Bolivia, 10 October 2007

SPFII was invited to participate at the International Meeting "For the Historic Victory of Indigenous Peoples of the World", in celebration of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was jointly organized by the five indigenous organizations of Bolivia (CSUTCB, CIDOB, FNMICIO"BS", CONAMAQ y CSCB). It was attended by more than 100 indigenous representatives of 136 countries around the world

From 8 to 9 October, Fondo Indigena organized a closed meeting to discuss the meaning and strategies to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (The Declaration). Also, a draft document for discussion was prepared and was shared with the organizers of the international meeting.

The international meeting was held on the 10th of October in La Paz, on the 11th of October in Tiwanaku and on the 12th of October in Chimore, Cochabamba. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the significance of the Declaration for indigenous peoples and to develop strategies for its implementation. Also the Declaration of Chimore with 14 points was adopted by the indigenous leaders.

The event was attended by well known indigenous leaders such as Rigoberta Menchu, Nobel Peace Prize, indigenous leaders from Ecuador, Colombia, Nicaragua, New Zealand, Canada among others, which allowed a productive dialogue in favour of the development of a common agenda to implement the Declaration.

President Evo Morales from Bolivia attended all the events and as a Head of State called to other governments to work with indigenous peoples based in the Declaration and support its implementation. Also, President Morales reminded indigenous peoples that the Declaration is an international instrument that recognizes

indigenous peoples as nations.

During the panel discussions, SPFI highlighted the work of the Permanent Forum and the process of participation at its annual session. The audience analyzed Articles 41 and 42 where the Permanent Forum is mentioned and gave recommendations that will be delivered at the seventh session of the UNPFII.

SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation on human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people. 28 September 2007, Switzerland, Geneva

On 28 September 2007, the Human Rights Council, during its sixth session, decided to renew for an additional period of three years the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people.

The Council's new resolution reaffirms and reinforces the Special Rapporteur's mandate as described in previous resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights, in areas such as the Special Rapporteur's official visits, communications, and annual reporting.

The Council's resolution further includes a number of important innovations in relationship to previous resolutions, including the promotion of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, along with other relevant international standards. It also invites the Special Rapporteur to work in close cooperation with the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and to participate in its annual session.

The current mandate-holder, Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen from Mexico, will finish his term at Council's resumed session in December 2007, when he will also present his final report. In order to avoid a protection gap, he will retain the mandate until the appointment of the new mandate-holder, initially expected in March 2008.

To read information on the Special Rapporteur's mandate, please visit <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/rapporteur/>

Call for the appointment of a new Special Rapporteur on the situation on human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, 23 October 2007.

The Human Rights Council (HRC) during its last session in September 2007, decided upon the criteria for the nomination for special procedures mandate-holders (decision 6-102). These criteria, as well as the procedure that was formally adopted by the HRC at its June session (Resolution 5/1), will guide the replacement of those mandate-holders who have already completed their 6 year-term. This includes the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people.

The new Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people is expected to be appointed by the HRC during its 7th session in March 2008. The Consultative Groups will submit the short list of candidates to the President by the beginning of February 2008 and will consult the public list of candidates in the weeks before. All relevant stakeholders are thus invited to submit their candidates at their earliest

convenience.

Information on the procedure is available online at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/rapporteur/appointment.htm>

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIRD COMMITTEE

Highlights of GA Third Committee Agenda Item 67- Indigenous Issues, 22 October 2007, UNHQ

The item was introduced by Mr. Johan Scholvinck, Director of DSPD/DESA, on behalf of Under-Secretary-General Mr. Sha Zukang, Coordinator of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, who underlined that the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (The Declaration) by the General Assembly is a major achievement of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and it calls on the entire United Nations system, including the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, to "promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of the Declaration". The Declaration belongs to the whole world. All States, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, the UN Permanent Forum and the entire UN system are invited to pursue and propel the implementation of the Declaration.

It was also highlighted that indigenous and local communities are not passive victims of climate change but can indeed be valuable partners in the global efforts to address this sustainable development challenge. Indigenous peoples have a great deal to contribute in designing and implementing responses to climate change and in exploring ways and means of effective collaboration in pursuit of mutual goals.

Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people stated that during this period he carried out an official mission to Kenya and non-official visits to different countries in Asia including Cambodia, the Philippines and Nepal. Mr. Stavenhagen mentioned that in terms of positive developments, we have witnessed the adoption of new norms, establishment of new institutions, and the implementation of new policies both at national and the international levels for the protection of indigenous peoples' human rights, however there is still an "implementation gap" between norms and the practice.

Mr. Stavenhagen drew attention to various processes leading to the loss of indigenous peoples' lands and traditional resources by indigenous peoples, who experienced the dispossession of their traditional habitat practically without compensation or economic alternatives. In order to defend their rights, indigenous peoples resort to different forms of social organization and mobilization however, these social protests are criminalized. Also, he drew attention to the situation of indigenous migrants who are exposed to violations of their human rights. Mr. Stavenhagen mentioned that a study on the best practices in the implementation of his recommendations was prepared and it identified the limited level of implementation of the Special Rapporteur's recommendations.

Mr. Stavenhagen highlighted the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the

General Assembly, which reaffirms that indigenous peoples enjoy both individual and collective rights that have been recognized at the international level. He stressed that the Declaration is part of the normative corpus that will guide human rights bodies in their evolutionary interpretation of existing human rights instruments. It will help Member States in order to respond effectively to the longstanding and persistent claims made by indigenous for recognition of and respect for their human rights.

Questions to the Special Rapporteur were addressed by the delegations of Cuba, Canada, Viet Nam, Lao, Portugal, Mexico and South Africa.

Many delegations addressed the session, in general calling for implementation of the Declaration through national constitutions, laws, policies and programmes. Some delegations stressed that self-determination should be interpreted in accordance with the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity. Support to the work of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Special Rapporteur was unanimous. States that addressed the session were: Algeria, Bolivia, Cuba, China, Ecuador, Finland (on behalf of the Nordic Countries), Fiji, Guatemala, Guyana, Greece, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Peru, Russian Federation, The Philippines and USA

Representatives of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) also made statements and called for support for the implementation of the Declaration.

Other points of the discussion were:

- Various statements underlining positive measures taken by governments at the national level.
- The agency statements (IOM and IFAD) highlighted their work on indigenous issues and how the Declaration will help to carry on their work at national level.
- The enormous potential of indigenous peoples to contribute to mitigate the effects of climate change.

The atmosphere this year at the Third Committee was one of general consensus and positive spirit.

To read the complete transcript of the discussions GA/SHC/3891, please visit <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2007/gashc3891.doc.htm>

SPECIAL NEWS

Participation of SPFII at the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 8 – 12 October 2007, Montreal, Canada

The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) met in plenary and in informal regional consultations. ABS is expected to set the rules on how benefits from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge are to be fairly and equitably shared between the provider countries and indigenous and local communities which are the holders of the knowledge, and the companies and research institutions which are mainly from developed countries.

The historic adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) in September has given a major boost to the demands of indigenous people in the ABS discussions and was quoted often by various states

as the basis for an ABS regime. The Declaration sets out the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples; recognizes their rights to land and other resources; calls for the maintenance and strengthening of their cultural identities; and emphasizes their right to pursue development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations. It also prohibits discrimination against indigenous peoples and promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them.

The sixth meeting of the Working Group will be held in Geneva from 21-25 January 2008.

On 11 October a side event was organized by the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity. They discussed the recently adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and how Article 8(j) of the CBD must take these rights into account.

To read the highlights of the meeting, please visit <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/abs5/>

Participation of SPFII at the Working Group session regarding the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 26 - 28 November 2007, OAS Headquarters.



OAS Permanent Council meeting, 28 November 2007

The Special Meeting - Process of Reflection on the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (draft American Declaration) was held in the headquarters of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington D.C. from 26 to 28 November 2007. The Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, Albert R. Ramdin; the Chairman of the Working Group, Amb. Reynaldo Cuadros Anaya opened the session. Mr. Luis Enríquez Chavez of the Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations and SPFII were invited as special guests.

During the discussions, a majority of States and all the representatives of the Indigenous Caucus agreed that a basic reference point should be the UN Declaration. It was stressed that international law should be the standard against which the American Declaration is negotiated. Member State delegations and the Indigenous Caucus also agreed to establish clear guidelines for the negotiations, and to identify obstacles and issues on which progress has been made with regard to the draft American Declaration.

These decisions were part of a package of outcomes and recommendations that arose from a three-day "reflection session" and they were submitted on Wednesday 28 November for consideration by the Permanent Council at a meeting chaired by Argentina's Ambassador Rodolfo Gil.

The Working Group Chairman, Bolivia's Ambassador to

the OAS Reynaldo Cuadros Anaya, presented the outcomes and recommendations to the Permanent Council, alongside the Indigenous Caucus' representative, Adelfo Rufino. "Bolivia has adopted the universal declaration under its domestic laws, the first country in the world to do so," Cuadros said, urging all the OAS Member States to "identify shared values and join with the Indigenous peoples in this effort." Rufino, meanwhile, stressed that it was important for the Indigenous Caucus that the dialogue of the reflection session was "based on good faith and sincerity," and that "our voice is being heard at the OAS."

The reflection session also agreed on changes to the methodology in negotiating the draft American Declaration, with the Indigenous Caucus underscoring the importance of doing a comparative study of the OAS Draft Declaration and the UN Declaration.

During Wednesday's Permanent Council meeting as well, the Member States ambassadors commended the Working Group on its efforts, and lauded the outcomes and recommendations that emerged from the reflection session. They also expressed their commitment to supporting efforts to achieve the necessary consensus for concluding negotiations on the American Declaration as soon as possible.

Seminar by Prof. John Taylor of the Australian National University on "40 years since the 1987 Constitutional Referendum on removing the race clause: How indigenous Australians faring?", 8 November 2007, UNHQ.

Prof. John Taylor, a Senior Fellow and Deputy Director at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy and Research, The Australian National University, and a member of the Australian Population Association, gave a very interesting seminar at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) on how indigenous Australians are faring, 40 years after the Australian Constitutional Referendum in 1967 which was designed to remove the race clause. He pointed out the difficulties of first identifying indigenous peoples in the census as many people do not answer that particular question on the census sheet. He also discussed the issues around collecting census information from indigenous peoples. However, according to the information that is collected, indigenous peoples still lag behind the rest of the Australian population in all indicators of well-being and how indigenous peoples understand the concept of wellbeing which is quite different from the way Governments understand the concept of wellbeing. People in the audience felt the information presented by Mr. Taylor could easily be from any indigenous place in the world.

First Latin-American meeting of Local Governments in Indigenous Territories, 26 – 29 November 2007, Quito, Ecuador

Mr. Jonas Rabinovitch of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs participated at the First Latin-American meeting of Local Governments in Indigenous Territories held in Quito, Ecuador. Mr. Rabinovitch participated within the context of (i) providing support to the UNDAF Planning Process in Ecuador as part of an effort to engage Non-Resident Agencies (NRAs) for the UN to deliver as one, in the context of the National Development Plan for Ecuador 2007-2010. (ii) To advance networking and information gathering for reviewing a project for Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of Municipalities with Indigenous Mayors in Ecuador.

More information about the event at <http://www.formia.org.ec/encuentro/Principa/inicio.asp>
United Nations Cyberschoolbus of 2007, 7 December 2007, UNHQ, New York.

On 7 December SPFI participated at the UN Cyberschoolbus of 2007, an educational programme of the Department of Public Information addressing high school students from around the world, both at Headquarters and, via videoconferencing, other locations. SPFI's presentation was on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

To learn more about the programme, please visit <http://www.cyberschoolbus.un.org/student/2007/programme.asp>

International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2007, UNHQ, New York.

On 10 December, on the occasion of International Human Rights Day, SPFI participated at an event at UN Headquarters entitled "All of It, for All of Us: Toward an Inclusive Human Rights Agenda". The event was organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the NGO Committee on Human Rights and the Mission of Switzerland., as the first in a dialogue series devoted to the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

United Nations Model in Aymara language – United Nations Information Centres, La Paz, Bolivia

On 9 October, after several months of preparation, the students of the Integral Educative Program for the Municipality of Calamarca –UDABOL (60 Km south of La Paz) carried out their United Nations –completely in Aymara language. The model followed strictly the rules of all UN Models, except for the fact that took hostages and their liberation was subject to negotiations. The visiting UN officials learned the most useful of words; "Aruskip", which means "negotiation". The Models was carried out as part of the graduation program. UDABOL is trying to obtain the approval of the Bolivian Ministry of Education for the continuation of this program.

UNPFII - 7TH SESSION

Preparations for the Seventh Session of the UNPFII, to be held from 21 April to 2 May 2008, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Special theme for the seventh session: "Climate change, bio-cultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges". The provisional agenda is available online. Other relevant information on the seventh session of the Permanent Forum will be made available in due time at the following address: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_sev_enth.html

Online Pre-registrations are open

Please note that there are three forms for pre-registration:

1. Online pre-registration for Indigenous Peoples' Organizations that have not attended previous UNPFII sessions
2. Online pre-registration for academic institutions that have not attended previous UNPFII sessions

- Online Pre-Registration for NGOs in Consultative Status with ECOSOC and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations and academics that do not have ECOSOC Consultative Status but have attended previous UNPFII sessions

Preparations for the international expert group meeting on "Indigenous Languages", 8 - 10 January 2008, UNHQ, New York.

SPFII is in the process of preparation of the international expert group meeting on "Indigenous Languages" mandated by the UNPFII at its sixth session in May 2007 and confirmed by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2007/244. The expert workshop will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 8 to 10 January 2008.

The international expert group meeting will bring together experts from the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, Governments and indigenous experts. Its aim is to contribute to further progress on this issue and submit a report for the Permanent Forum's seventh session. Due to the technical nature of this meeting, a limited number of participants will be able to attend.

The expert papers and report of the international workshop will be available on the website.

VISITS TO SPFII

Chiefs from Nova Scotia visited SPFII, 23 October 2007

On 23 October, the Chief and Council of the Shubenacadie Band Council, the governing body of the Shubenacadie Mi'kmaq Band, visited the SPFII to learn about the relationship between the United Nations and the Indigenous People of North America, and to learn about the efforts within the UNPFII forums in advancing the relationship between indigenous nations and governments. The Chief and Council of the Shubenacadie Band Council provided an overview of the many issues that are facing the Mi'kmaq peoples from the effects of boarding schools, lack of access to basic services as well the issue of border arrangements for the Mi'kmaq peoples who live on both sides of the USA and Canadian borders and are now required to have passports which will affect certain cultural practices such as harvesting of certain foods that takes place across these borders at particular times of the year. The Chief and Council of the Shubenacadie Band Council are hoping to attend the seventh session of the UNPFII in 2008.

Children from Salekhard, Russian Federation visited SPFII, 24 October 2007

On 24 October, SPFII received the visit of 12 high school students from the Yamal Nenets Region of the Russian Federation and held a briefing seminar for the students on indigenous issues. The students were prize winners from their area and were visiting the UN as part of their international curriculum.

Members of the African Congress of Pygmies visited SPFII, 31 October 2007

Mr. Antoine Lanoa Isofaka, Ms. Thérèse Pambo and Mr. Grégoire Bokungu Ifangwa, respectively the president and vice-presidents of the African Congress of Pygmies (CONAFPY) visited SPFII on 31 October 2007. CONAFPY is an indigenous peoples' organization based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Before their visit to SPFII, CONAFPY's leaders had participated in the conference Lynchburg, Ota Benga and the Empowerment of the Pygmies, held in Lynchburg, Virginia on 25-27 October.

SPFII also participated at this conference with a presentation on the topic Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations

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- United Nations Model in Aymara language – United Nations Information Centres, 9 October 2007, La Paz, Bolivia
- Participation of SPFII at the Indigenous Peoples Conference in celebration of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 8 – 12 October 2007, La Paz, Bolivia.
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- Members of the African Congress of Pygmies visited SPFII, 31 October 2007

NOVEMBER

- Regional Meeting of the Advisory Group of Indigenous Leaders with the UN System in Latin America and the Caribbean, 5 - 6 November 2007, Quito, Ecuador
- SPFII met with President Evo Morales of Bolivia, the United Nations Country Team in Bolivia and the National Council for Dialogue between the Indigenous Organizations and the UN System in Bolivia, 8 - 9 November 2007, La Paz, Bolivia
- Seminar by Prof. John Taylor of the Australian National University on "40 years since the 1987 Constitutional Referendum on removing the race clause: How indigenous Australians faring?" 8 November 2007, UNHQ.
- Participation of Ms. Liliane Muzangi at the expert meeting on Indigenous Peoples and the Second Decade on indigenous peoples, Brazzaville, 12 – 13 November 2007
- Participation of Ms. Liliane Muzangi at the 42nd session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights held in Brazzaville, 14 to 28 November 2007
- United Nations Development Group Task Team Meeting, 15 November 2007, UNHQ

- Participation of SPFII at the Working Group session regarding the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 26 - 28 November 2007, OAS Headquarters.
- Participation of Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz and Mr. Hassan Id Balkassm at the International Financial Institutions meeting, IFAD Rome.
- First Latin-American meeting of Local Governments in Indigenous Territories, 26 – 29 November 2007, Quito, Ecuador
- Opening of the pre-registration for the Seventh Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

DECEMBER

- Press conference on Indigenous Rights Declaration, 6 September, UNHQ
- Participation of SPFII to the VIII International Meeting on Gender Statistics for Public Policies, 5-7 September, Aguascalientes, Mexico.
- Letter to Indigenous organizations regarding the 2008 Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues relating to the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People cycle, 8 September 2007, UNHQ
- Adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, General Assembly, United Nations Headquarters, 13 September 2007.
- United Nations Cyberschoolbus of 2007, 7 December 2007, UNHQ, New York.
- Participation of Ms. Ida Nicolaisen, Mr. Hassan Id Balkassm and Mr. Wilton Littlechild members of the UNPFII at the Informal Meeting on new mechanisms on Indigenous Peoples, 6-7 December 2007, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.
- International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2007, UNHQ, New York.
- Article on "Indigenous Peoples the Millennium Development Goals" prepared by SPFII, December 2007
- Preparations for the Seventh Session of the UNPFII, to be held from 21 April to 2 May 2008, UNHQ, New York
- Preparations for the international expert group meeting on "Indigenous Languages", 8 - 10 January 2008, UNHQ, New York

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