

**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
Fourth Session, May 16-27, 2005**



**Statement by Goodluck Diigbo, President, Partnership for Indigenous Peoples'  
Environment, PIPE (ECOSOC/DPI)**

*United Nations Headquarters, New York, 23 May 2005*

**Improving Communication Right 5**

I thank you Madam chair for the opportunity to address this Forum on behalf of PIPE. I also congratulate you for your election. My compliments also for new and old members of the Forum.

My name is Goodluck Diigbo, President of PIPE. My duty here today is to explain how my organization will be using a new initiative to guarantee the communication right of indigenous peoples. The project known as *Partnership Electronic Communication System, PECS* is the first NGO Internet Portal that will guarantee access to the internet for indigenous peoples worldwide. Its objective includes both short and long term goals.

It all started when PIPE wanted to produce a directory of indigenous peoples in 2002. Contacting indigenous peoples was a major problem. The first expectation of this project therefore is to ease communication difficulty. It will also provide indigenous peoples the avenue to explain their situations, issues, and positions on contentious subjects such as wealth and resource control, self-determination, denial of human rights and basic freedoms, right to land and the use of indigenous languages. This will ensure that indigenous peoples are heard, and become more visible, electronically. The second aim, which is a long-term expectation, is that it would create climate of peaceful co-existence, necessary for the peace and security of the world. In over 30 countries, there are disputes between indigenous peoples, governments and corporations.

The project will be launched on May 26, 2005 at the United Nations Conference Room 4, at 6.30PM. The event will be used to demonstrate the technology. Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples will attend. There will be a musical entertainment portraying the journey of indigenous peoples from bondage to freedom. It will also feature a video discussion of important indigenous issues.

Significantly, the event is taking place along side the ongoing Fourth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The Forum is an advisory body

to the Economic and Social Council. Its mandate is to discuss indigenous issues related to culture, economic and social development, education, the environment, health and human rights. PECS' aim is to take the mandate of the Forum to the next level, by extending the dialogue beyond the walls of the United Nations building. It will avail indigenous peoples the opportunity to follow-up issues brought to the Permanent Forum. Before now, there has been little or no global opportunity for indigenous peoples to share their experiences once they have returned home from the Forum. Many indigenous peoples have as a result been suffering in silence, having no outlet to voice their concerns. In some cases, the media, international institutions and non-governmental organizations become aware of indigenous predicament after irreparable damage had been done to them. This will change in the future, because PIPE will constantly make indigenous feelings and situations known as they post their messages on our website.

Looking at the chart, the way PECS would function becomes clearer. It will be a significant information dissemination strategy. In 2002, the Indigenous Peoples Global Conference, IPGC<sup>1</sup> sponsored by PIPE, concluded that this arrangement was essential for constructing and building inter-group networks and relationships. It also observed that in a global economy, the private sector dominates. To survive, indigenous peoples need equal presence on the global scene. But this will be impossible without means of communication. Recently, a letter was brought to my attention, suggesting that a private company was approached to install telephone lines in an indigenous community in parts of Mexico, and a spokesperson for the company said: "We are a private company and our only obligation as private company is to make profits." Conflicts have also been used as excuse for lack of provision of communication facilities in indigenous homelands.

Many NGOs have either set up websites to serve individual groups, or for regional interest. Never has an NGO established a well-planned Internet Portal such as the one envisaged by this project to connect all indigenous peoples worldwide. Our arrangement will involve partnership with Internet café, companies, institutions, and other organizations to create access for indigenous peoples. We will also directly link other indigenous peoples' websites to project their visibility. Indigenous groups will be allowed space on our website to post information (subject to moderation by PIPE's appointed experts and consultants). Information regarding emergencies would be disseminated in

the form *Urgent Appeal*, *Alert Message*, *Urgent Action*, and *Early Warning*. Schools, governments, and the United Nations agencies, NGOs, media, and issue-based bodies will be sent such materials. (Look at the chart again to see the flow). Conflict situations and humanitarian emergencies affecting indigenous peoples would receive special attention. PECS will enable indigenous peoples to meet more frequently, communicate and share information.

More information about PIPE can be obtained from [www.pipeorg.com](http://www.pipeorg.com) or [www.pipeorgg.com](http://www.pipeorgg.com). Founded in 1993, PIPE is the organization best equipped in terms of networks, resources, personnel and time for the project. PIPE has its headquarters in New York, and it has 240 affiliate bodies at national and local levels. We plan to hold a workshop in September 2005 to train the trainers for our current project. The workshop will pave way for training of grassroots moderators of our Internet Portal. The training is also to make them sensitive to cyber terrorism and to operate within PIPE's stipulated security guidelines. Funding is already being sought for the project. Evaluation of the project will be done on quarterly.

As we look ahead to the Fifth Session of the Permanent Forum, the future presents leaders and organizations of indigenous peoples not only with some continued human rights challenges, but also some unique opportunities as exemplified by PECS.

Goodluck Diigbo

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23<sup>rd</sup> May 2005

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<sup>1</sup> IPGC was sponsored by the Partnership for Indigenous Peoples Environment, PIPE an NGO in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, and accredited as an Affiliate of the Department of Public Information, DPI of the United Nations. IPGC was co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Peru to the United Nations. The Ford Foundation, New York funded the project.

Congratulations

\* Madam Chair & other Members  
of UNPFII

\* Madam Chair, I have  
one proposal to ~~let~~ ~~be~~ me  
to the PFII as a ~~second~~  
to the UNITED NATIONS.

\* Mandate of the PFII

That the dialogue we are holding  
here on issues of significant  
interest <sup>to</sup> the indigenous peoples be  
Carried