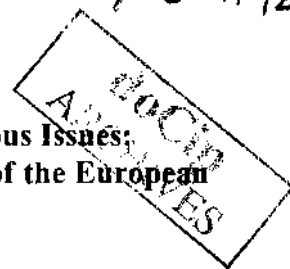


Items 20/05 #12



**3rd Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues;
Statement by the European Commission on behalf of the European
Community**



Agenda item 6. The Future Work of the Permanent Forum

The European Commission's commitment to supporting and promoting the situations and rights of indigenous peoples is framed by two resolutions adopted by the Council of the European Union, in 1998 and 2002. These statements deal primarily with Indigenous Peoples within the framework of the development co-operation activities of the Community and the EU Member States. They also underline EU support for UN mechanisms in working with indigenous peoples. One of the four thematic priorities of the 100 million Euro per year "European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights" is the combating of racism, xenophobia and discrimination against minorities and indigenous peoples.

The European Commission therefore has a solid foundation for contributing to and supporting the work of the Permanent Forum in all its mandated areas. Under this year's EIDHR, the Commission will be seeking project proposals that aim to build the capacity of indigenous peoples and their representatives to participate in, contribute to and follow up the work of existing UN or other international mechanisms and procedures - the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is clearly such a mechanism.

The European Commission believes that through the EIDHR we will be able to add value to the recommendations of the PFII concerning the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In the same spirit and manner we are currently seeking to contribute to the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples through a targeted project in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. This project which was described earlier this week by the OHCHR builds on the Recommendations of the Special Rapporteur and aims to promote and protect the human rights of indigenous peoples in Central America with particular focus on Guatemala and Mexico.

Though the Permanent Forum does not have an implementing mandate, there are ways in which it can work to facilitate the implementation of its recommendations, notably by directing specific recommendations towards initiatives that can be taken by indigenous peoples' organisations and communities themselves. This approach will further enable the addition of complementary contributions of many players and donors, who have the established capacity and means of implementation, and are ready to join forces in promoting the rights of indigenous peoples.

The European Commission is very much looking forward to examining the recommendations of this year's session of the Permanent Forum.

Thank you, Chairman.