

(26) 16.2.94, pm doCip

Australian Intervention on Membership of Perm Forum

Australia open minded on membership but believe that the "core group" or "executive committee" should consist of both indigenous ~~and~~ representatives and governments.

There are clear advantages to involvement by governments including enhanced prestige, profile and access by the permanent forum. However, the price will have to be operation on the basis of consensus.

If some participants have ^{legal} difficulty in accepting mixed members of governments and NGOs - government officials ~~might~~ can sit in their personal capacity - there are precedents within UN system.

Involvement of UN Specialised Agencies is vital as important dialogue partners, but we wonder whether they should be invited as members of the core group or in some other appropriate capacity.

We believe that the number of members of the core group should be ~~the~~ smaller rather than greater - to facilitate agreement and to minimise expenditure on the servicing of meetings.

~~It~~ On the other hand, we would favour a liberal approach to observer status - perhaps all interested members of civil society should be granted access, and not just NGOs with ECOSOC status.

WGPF 99 GOV/OCE. AUS/7

18 February 1999

NOTE FOR SECRETARIAT REPORT

- AUSTRALIAN INTERVENTION ON WGIP AND FINANCE -

Australia noted that, for many years, the WGIP had fulfilled an important function. However, it had largely completed its work and we were now looking at a possible new body to advance indigenous interests in the UN context.

For reasons of function, efficiency, focus, and effective utilisation of resources, Australia would not be in a position to accept the establishment of a permanent forum without some decision on the future of the WGIP. The possibility of some sort of transition mechanism could be looked at but, basically, one body would have to replace the other.

It follows from this that Australia believes that any Permanent Forum would have to be budget neutral. We agree with those who have said that this funding should continue to come from the regular budget of the UN and that voluntary contributions should also be allowed.

WGPF 99 GOV/OCE - AUS/21

Australia