

ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY
FOR THE
PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

REPORT FOR 1984 TO THE
UNITED NATIONS WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

The Human Rights Fund for Indigenous peoples

The Anti-Slavery Society is happy to inform the Working Group that it has established a human rights fund for indigenous peoples. The purpose of the fund is to help indigenous peoples make their human rights problems better known to the international community and the general public by assisting with travel and other expenses of representatives to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

The Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the United Nations is the only international forum for the discussion of indigenous peoples' rights and if it is to function successfully it must receive statements from the indigenous peoples themselves. A number of problems obstruct this procedure. The expenses of travel can be particularly onerous to tribal people; papers and passports can be difficult to obtain; the official languages of the United Nations are sometimes unknown to the indigenous peoples and, finally, unfamiliarity with United Nations procedure and the manner in which to put interventions can act as a barrier to communications. The aim of the fund is to encourage and support self-help initiatives by indigenous peoples in their efforts to get recognition and protection of their rights.

WGIP 84/UN1/4

The assistance envisaged by the fund includes the following:

- * Financial help towards travel to the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission on Human Rights in Geneva;
- * Provision of living expenses during the period;
- * Advice on presentation of submissions to the United Nations;
- * Translation into United Nations working languages and secretarial support;
- * The arrangement of visits to other bodies based in Geneva such as the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the World Council of Churches, members of the press and other representatives of indigenous peoples;
- * Co-ordination where possible of any subsequent tour in Europe for the purposes of fund-raising, publicity or teaching.

Until such time as other official support is made available to indigenous peoples, the Anti-Slavery Society proposes to administer the Human Rights Fund. At the present time it is guided by an Advisory Group made up of representatives of the Anti-Slavery Society, representatives from NGOs with a special concern for the rights of indigenous peoples and representatives of indigenous peoples.

The fund receives the support and collaboration of various organizations and agencies including the Anti-Slavery Society (Norway), Oxfam, Christian Aid, Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker, Workgroup for Indigenous Peoples (Holland) and the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (Denmark).

Further information can be obtained from the Anti-Slavery Society.