

**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.: Limited  
21 May 2007

Original: English

---

**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues****Sixth session**

New York, 14-25 May 2007

Items 4 (a), (b) and (c) of the provision agenda\*

**Implementation of recommendations on the six mandated areas  
and on Millennium Development Goals: economic and social  
development; environment; health**

**Recommendations on agenda items 4 (a), (b) and (c)****Submitted by the Rapporteur****I. Economic and social development***(Agenda item 4 (a))*

1. The Permanent Forum reiterates its concern that reports developed and presented by many States on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction strategy papers still do not adequately include and address indigenous peoples nor do they include the participation of indigenous peoples,<sup>1</sup> and therefore calls on States to rectify this weakness and on United Nations agencies to support their efforts. While the Millennium Development Goals provide an important international framework for addressing extreme poverty and health and social outcomes, the Permanent Forum recommends that it is vital that further work be undertaken to ensure that the related programmes are fully appreciative and respect the rights and aspirations of indigenous peoples. This work should utilize the results of the workshops on indicators.<sup>2</sup>

2. The Permanent Forum recognizes that the United Nations has declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity and that indigenous peoples, as custodians of the Earth's biodiversity, should be major players in actions planned for 2010. In this spirit, the Permanent Forum calls for close cooperation between the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Forum in promoting the International Year and highlighting the role of indigenous peoples as custodians of biodiversity.

---

\* E/C.19/2007/1.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session\\_sixth.html](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_sixth.html).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/data.html>.



3. The Permanent Forum urges the relevant Governments visited by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people to implement the recommendations contained in his reports regarding mega-projects implemented using the territories, lands and natural resources of indigenous peoples.
4. The Permanent Forum welcomes the positive contributions of the members of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues and urges them to continue implementing development projects and programmes in participation with indigenous peoples, where applicable. At the same time, the Forum requests that more case studies of good practices and lessons learned be presented at the sessions of the Forum, including information about less successful cases.
5. The Permanent Forum encourages national and international financial institutions to target indigenous peoples as beneficiaries of their micro-financing mechanisms and other relevant mechanisms, with the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples.
6. The Permanent Forum expresses concern about the situation of indigenous men, who, in the development process suffer losses in their traditional livelihoods in their family structures and in their roles in the community, and the social challenges they face as a result, as shown by many social indices, and urges United Nations agencies to undertake a study on the changing role of indigenous men in the economic development process.

## **II. Environment**

*(Agenda item 4 (b))*

7. The Permanent Forum urges the secretariat, in cooperation with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, to organize a side-event on the occasion of the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as an occasion for the co-chairs of the Working Group, States parties and other interested groups to consider the conclusions and recommendations of the report of the international expert group meeting on the Convention on Biological Diversity's international regime on access and benefit-sharing and indigenous peoples' human rights (E/C.19/2007/8).
8. The Permanent Forum urges States parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to seriously consider the recommendations of the above-mentioned international expert group meeting, which was held in January 2007.
9. The Permanent Forum urges States to recognize indigenous peoples' customary laws on genetic resources and traditional knowledge and to consider the development of sui generis systems based on such customary laws, as appropriate, for the protection of traditional knowledge and access and benefit-sharing of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.
10. The Permanent Forum appoints Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz as its special rapporteur to prepare a report on "Impact of climate change mitigation measures on the territories and lands of indigenous peoples", to be submitted to the next

Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to feed into the next session of Permanent Forum.

11. Recognizing the deep spiritual relationship indigenous peoples have with water, and the great respect they have for the natural laws governing the health and the sanctity of water, the Permanent Forum recommends that States review, with the direct participation of indigenous peoples, their laws on water regulation and the treaties, land claims and self-government agreements that they have entered into with indigenous peoples, taking into account the sanctity of water reflected in those agreements. It is further recommended that States present their reviews to the session of the Permanent Forum in 2009, in particular on the status of the implementation of laws and agreements with respect to water and indigenous peoples.

12. The Permanent Forum is requested to support the planning and development of a World Indigenous Forum on the Right to Water, including the cultural and spiritual dimensions of water and peace. Planning for the Forum shall be carried out through appropriate United Nations agencies and bodies and indigenous people's organizations from all regions that have been working on water issues, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Water Education, the World Water Assessment Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

13. The Permanent Forum applauds the historic decision of the United Nations Human Rights Council in recognizing the right to water as a human right, as well as in initiating a study on the scope and content of the relevant human rights obligations related to equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation under international human rights instruments, to be submitted prior to the sixth session of the Council.<sup>3</sup> The Permanent Forum also calls upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to present to the seventh session of Permanent Forum the results of her study on the impact on the rights of indigenous peoples in terms of contamination, diversion, appropriation and privatization of water, which is sacred to indigenous peoples and is central to all life. Participants shared many examples of these impacts, which profoundly affect their peoples.

14. The Permanent Forum welcomes the invitation extended by the Russian Federation to hold a United Nations expert group meeting devoted to environmental and indigenous peoples' issues in Khabarovsk, Russian Federation, in August 2007, and invites other States to follow the good example of the Russian Federation.

15. The Permanent Forum takes note of the following reports:

(a) "Cultural indicators for food security, food sovereignty and sustainable development", from the second Global Consultation on the Right to Food, Food Security and Food Sovereignty for Indigenous Peoples, held in Nicaragua in September 2006;

(b) The Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Meeting on Indicators, held in Nicaragua in September 2006;

(c) Meeting on indigenous peoples and indicators of well-being; aboriginal policy research conference, Ottawa, March 2006.

<sup>3</sup> A/HRC/2/9, decision 2/104, on Human rights and access to water.

The Permanent Forum further recommends that United Nations agencies, Member States and indigenous peoples utilize these indicators and support further efforts to develop them.

### III. Health

*(Agenda item 4 (c))*

16. Recalling the right to health of indigenous peoples and their dire health conditions, the Permanent Forum reiterates its call upon the World Health Organization (WHO) to report to the Forum on strategies, programmes, projects and other initiatives launched by the organization to address the health problems of indigenous peoples and that the systems of indicators be put in place to monitor their progress.

17. The Permanent Forum calls upon all States to work with indigenous peoples to develop and implement right-to-health indicators, to use the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to health and to set benchmarks and timelines to ensure that indigenous peoples' right to health is progressively realized, as required by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and in the Millennium Development Goals.

18. Reports received by the Permanent Forum indicate that United Nations agencies, notably UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), incorporate indigenous issues into their health programming at the country and regional levels and apply culturally sensitive approaches to health delivery. The Forum encourages those agencies to share their experience in health programming for indigenous peoples with other relevant United Nations agencies working in the field.

19. Given the rapid increase in diabetes among indigenous peoples, the Permanent Forum calls upon WHO to undertake a pilot study to assess the prevalence among selected indigenous peoples worldwide among the seven regions.

20. Noting the widespread malnutrition among indigenous peoples, the Permanent Forum urges the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) to ensure that all interventions by the organizations aimed at reducing this problem in indigenous communities are based on assessments of the structural causes of the problem, including access to land and availability of natural resources. Moreover, methods of interventions should be sensitive to the social fabric and respectful of indigenous peoples' models of development.

21. Calling attention to the high rates of suicide among indigenous youth in some countries, the Permanent Forum reiterates its call for States and relevant national aboriginal health bodies to convene a meeting on to assess root causes of indigenous youth suicide and to formulate preventive strategies. The Forum reiterates its call on UNICEF and WHO to convene a meeting on youth suicide.

22. Notwithstanding the absence of birth registration for indigenous children and adolescents, the allocation of funds for their health and other social benefits should not be affected. Moreover, since the lack of civil documentation exposes indigenous peoples to abuse and violation of their rights, the Permanent Forum recommends

that States, UNICEF, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and UNFPA support free and universal civil registration on the basis of free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples.

23. Drawing attention to the dramatic changes in the lifestyles of indigenous peoples and the ensuing deterioration of indigenous health due to malnutrition and obesity, including record high rates of diabetes and related illnesses such as hypertension, heart attacks, kidney failure and blindness, the Permanent Forum call upon WHO, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, WFP and FAO to develop joint strategies to address the problem of diabetes and related non-communicable lifestyle illnesses. Given the alarming prevalence of diabetes among indigenous peoples, the Permanent Forum calls upon WHO and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to establish a systematic working relationship with the Permanent Forum and the Inter-Agency Support Group to exchange experiences on health initiatives in the area of treatment and prevention of the illness, especially given their role in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

24. Considering the wars and conflicts that have afflicted a range of States in Africa, the Permanent Forum recommends that United Nations agencies (International Organization for Migration, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, UNFPA, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNDP and WHO) and African States urgently convene a general meeting on health in order to evaluate the negative effects of these conflicts on the health of indigenous peoples and to find appropriate solutions to address the issue.