

Friends,

Last month saw several important and even historic developments related to the rights of indigenous peoples.

### **American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

On May 19, after 19 rounds of negotiations and 27 years of work, the working group to prepare the draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples approved the draft Declaration, which is [attached](#). More information is available on the OAS [website](#).

The draft Declaration will now go to the Organization of American States (OAS) General Assembly for consideration at its annual session, June 13-15, 2016 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Once the General Assembly adopts the Declaration, indigenous peoples can begin using it to assert and defend their rights in the Americas. Unfortunately, the United States continues to object to the text of the draft Declaration and a number of countries are planning to propose explanatory notes or reservations as footnotes to the draft.

The OAS is a regional intergovernmental organization comprised of all 35 countries of the Americas. The American Declaration would be significant because the OAS houses two unique bodies – the Inter-American Court on Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which have a strong body of jurisprudence on indigenous peoples' rights in the Americas. Once adopted, these bodies will apply and implement the American Declaration in their work.

### **Participation of Indigenous Governments at the UN**

In May, the Office of the President of the UN General Assembly conducted two consultations in New York with member states and indigenous peoples on how to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions (governments) at the United Nations. Following the consultations, the Office of the President released the third draft compilation of views, which is [attached](#). The final consultation will take place in New York on June 30. To register to attend, please email [indigenous\\_un@un.org](mailto:indigenous_un@un.org) with the following information by June 24:

- Name(s) of individuals who will attend;
- Name of organization; and
- A brief description of the organization, including its objectives, activities and which indigenous peoples the organization represents or works for.

If you plan to attend, please let me know and we can share information and coordinate. Written comments will also continue to be received by [ipadvisers@un.org](mailto:ipadvisers@un.org) until June 30. The Center has submitted several rounds of comments to inform deliberations. Let me know if you would like copies of these. More information, including other submissions from countries and indigenous peoples is available on the UN [website](#).

Consultation results will be presented during the annual session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (July 11-15) in Geneva, Switzerland. Thereafter, the UN General Assembly will consider a resolution on how to enable participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions as early as this fall.

### **Implementing Body for the UN Declaration**

The report of the OHCHR Expert Workshop on the Review of the Expert Mechanism with a view to creating an implementing and monitoring body for the UN Declaration will also be discussed during the Expert Mechanism session. An advance copy of that report is [attached](#). More information about the Expert Mechanism's session, including registration details, is available [here](#).

### **Violence against indigenous women**

On May 18, the Center urged the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to take steps to implement the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and to address the urgent crisis of violence against indigenous women and girls. The full statement is [attached](#).

Important action is also being taken by the Human Rights Council this month when it meets for its 32<sup>nd</sup> session (June 13-July 1) in Geneva, Switzerland. The Council will hold a full-day panel discussion on women's rights; consider the reports of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice on its country visit to the United States; and adopt the annual resolutions on violence against women (with a focus on indigenous women) and discrimination against women. On June 16, the Council will hold a panel to examine the issue of violence against indigenous women and girls and its root causes, which will be broadcast live on <http://webtv.un.org>. More information about the upcoming session is available [here](#).

An updated calendar of UN meetings is also [attached](#) for your information. Please let me know if you have any questions or want to learn more about engaging in these processes more directly.

Best,

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