

Apr 17 UN meeting on participation of indigenous peoples' governments at UN

Friends,

On Tuesday, April 17, the President of the General Assembly will conduct an informal interactive hearing on enhanced participation of indigenous peoples representatives and institutions (governments) at the United Nations. This meeting will occur on the sidelines of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2018

Session (<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/news/2018/02/unpfii-seventeenth-session-16-27-april-2018/>) and will be open to indigenous participants accredited to attend the Permanent Forum. Registration to attend the Permanent Forum is open through April 2, and instructions for registration can be found here: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/unpfii-sessions-2/2017-2.html>.

After the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples resulted in a commitment by the UN to consider ways to enable indigenous participation at the UN, we had hoped that this would lead quickly to the creation of a new and appropriate status for indigenous governments that would grant them the right to participate fully in UN meetings and speak on their own behalf.

Unfortunately, despite significant progress, the UN was unable to reach consensus on several key issues even after many rounds of consultation and negotiation. Instead, in September 2017, the General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing a calendar of additional regional consultations and interactive hearings among UN representatives, indigenous peoples, and member states, for the next several years (<http://indianlaw.org/sites/default/files/A%20RES%2071%20321.pdf>). The results of this new set of discussions will contribute to the development of a new report with concrete recommendations for action by the General Assembly. This April 17 informal interactive hearing is the first of these new discussions.

This hearing presents us with an important opportunity to reiterate our core position that indigenous peoples' governments belong at the United Nations. Our representative institutions should be able to attend meetings at the UN and to participate fully without needing to go through an intermediary non-governmental organization. Although the consensus-driven process of the United Nations is slow, we remain confident that through continued hard work and engagement in this process, we will ultimately succeed.

We plan to share further information with you in the coming weeks. In the meantime, we hope that you will consider registering to attend the Permanent Forum so that you can attend the April 17 interactive hearing. Please contact me, Chris Foley, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Chris Foley

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