National Model United Nations
Week B

March 24 – March 28, 2013

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Documentation
United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Committee Staff

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Agenda

1. Improving Access to Education for Indigenous Children
2. Reconciling Indigenous Rights with Land Governance
3. Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Children in Situations of Armed Conflict

Report Segments adopted by the committee

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The session was attended by representatives of 13 States and 1 observer, Oxfam.

The session opened with several statements concerning the adoption of the agenda. At its first meeting, the Forum adopted its provisional agenda and decided to proceed with its work in different working groups. The agenda was set in the following order: Improving Access to Education for Indigenous Children, Reconciling Indigenous Rights with Land Governance, and Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Situations of Armed Conflict.

Over the next several committee sessions, various working groups formed to work on several important sub-topics. Key issues that arose during these sessions dealt with the improvement of curricula in order to better include indigenous needs, the creation of a forum to deal with specific challenges of indigenous committees, establishing mechanisms to achieve a better cooperation between Member States and their indigenous populations.

During the second session a motion to shorten the speaker’s time by thirty seconds was accepted by the body because it was felt that ninety seconds was ample time to express opinions while making the formal sessions move more swiftly. In the third session the first three working papers on curriculum, the creation of a forum, and the improvement of cooperation among actors were submitted. Within the fourth session one more working paper dealing with the creation of training centers for indigenous education was submitted to the dais. Initially some of the working groups aimed to merge their papers in order to connect common assumptions and themes within the papers surrounding the creation of a forum on indigenous issues. However, in the end they felt the outcome was better if they focused more on the specific aspects within the different working papers.

During the sixth session one more working paper was submitted focusing on bilingual education. In this session the first draft report segment was accepted and distributed to the delegations on the topic of culturally sensitive education for indigenous children.

In the seventh session the other four working papers became draft report segments, resulting in a total of 5 draft report segments accepted. No unfriendly amendments were submitted to the dais, exemplifying the environment of cooperation felt and demonstrated in this forum.

Finally, voting procedure began at the beginning of the eighth session. All five draft report segments passed, two of them by acclamation. Afterwards, the delegations began discussion on the second topic, Reconciling Indigenous Rights with Land Governance.
I. Introduction

A. CULTURALLY SENSITIVE EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

1. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is dedicated to eliminating inter-generational trauma within indigenous peoples due to improper mechanisms of education.

2. UNPFII emphasizes the promotion of Article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, which requires Member States to adopt immediate and effective measures to combat racial discrimination in education.

3. UNPFII recalls Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), which grants indigenous communities the right to all levels and forms of public education free from discrimination.

4. UNPFII also acknowledges Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which promotes understanding, tolerance, and friendship among racial groups in public schools.

5. The State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples identifies one of the primary threats to the access of education for indigenous children as being discrimination due to a lack of cultural sensitivity and awareness within the curriculum of public schools. The unfriendly education environments create a gap between the quality of education received by non-indigenous and indigenous students. Indigenous students also experience increasingly high drop-out rates and have less opportunities for success.

6. The UNPFII recognizes the need for culturally sensitive curriculum in public schools that facilitates a learning environment respecting their culture, identity, and other collective rights and needs.

7. This forum is fully aware of Australia’s program called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014 which promotes cooperation of indigenous communities with schools to ensure indigenous sensitivity in cross cultural learning environments. Within this program, UNPFII recognizes the important role Oxfam plays in promoting a cultural protocol in the development process.

B. PROMOTING THE PARTICIPATION AND COOPERATION OF INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATES

8. According to Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals, education is essential for the sustainability of any community, indigenous or otherwise. UNPFII recognizes the importance of
education for indigenous children in relation to the preservation and development of indigenous communities on the international stage.

9. As per article 14 of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the right to self-determination should be extended to indigenous communities. Additionally, UNPFII is aware that education has to be regionally and culturally specific as differences exist not only on the international level, but also on the national level.


C. CREATION OF TRAINING CENTRES FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

11. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) recognizes the challenges indigenous children face concerning their education, particularly in regions with difficulty of access due to geographic remoteness and the appropriation of quality education to indigenous peoples. Therefore, UNPFII reaffirms the need to improve the status of education in many indigenous communities.

12. In many Member States, indigenous children lack education that values their own culture and heritage, while still being able to obtain knowledge in more general fields of study.

13. In certain Member States, many instructors serving indigenous regions are trained under national or international standards, and are not indigenous themselves. UNPFII believes that indigenous pupils would be able to improve their ability to learn from instructors that can better understand and relate to their students.

14. While the United Nations has adopted declarations that are related to fundamental human rights such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, many nations have neither programmes nor the infrastructure in place to ensure that the instruction of children and teachers in indigenous regions is not the same as that of non-indigenous areas.

15. UNPFII acknowledges the complementary importance of teaching indigenous issues, cultural aspects and heritage in non-indigenous communities to promote equality, and foster understanding between people of all ethnic backgrounds.

D. PROTECTING AND PRESERVING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES THROUGH EDUCATION

16. Everyday indigenous languages are threatened with extinction and according to the data of National Alliance to Save Native Languages in the next ninety years 7,000 languages will disappear.
17. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) considers language preservation an urgent matter to address because too many languages have gone extinct and with them a way of life and knowledge are forever lost to the world. Therefore, this Forum believes the preservation of language requires the collective efforts of indigenous communities and the international community, in order to promote and support preservation projects, which ensures the inherent right of indigenous people in education, including the right to establish and control educational systems and institutions, and the right to teach and learn with their own methods and in their own languages.

18. Language immersion schools have proven to be a vital means towards preserving indigenous language and ensuring the rights of indigenous children to an education in their own languages and cultural methods. Recent success of indigenous communities in areas throughout the world in implementing language immersion schools aimed at teaching both traditional and contemporary educational curricula in indigenous language. Existing language immersion schools have proven to be highly effective in reviving indigenous language and ensuring it for future generations. Language immersion schools raise educational outcomes and academic success rates for indigenous children.

E. RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FOR EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENT

19. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) affirms the need to enhance access to education for indigenous peoples. This forum supports the efforts and concrete measures being undertaken by the Member States with the purpose of attaining Millennium Development Goal 2 which seeks to achieve universal primary education.

20. The UNPFII calls for States and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to essentially strengthen their synergies in realizing the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) goal of Education For All (EFA), especially for the indigenous children.

21. Recognition is equal to legitimization, which establishes the unique and collective rights of indigenous people. Without recognizing these rights, indigenous children will continue to face barriers in accessing education.

22. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) acknowledges that, despite improvements in advancing indigenous rights all over the world, many Member States’ constitutions do not explicitly recognize the existence of their indigenous populations. UNPFII realizes that this lack of recognition negatively impacts the individual and collective rights of the indigenous peoples, such as the right of the child to education, as stated in Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNPFII is also deeply disturbed by the lack of educational opportunities and access to education for indigenous populations.

23. The UNPFII is aware that the lack of a more encompassing definition of the term “indigenous peoples” hinders, implicitly or explicitly, the recognition of indigenous peoples by
other Member States. Hence, the absence of an expanded definition contributes to the deficiency in the acknowledgment of Indigenous Peoples as a vital unit of the State.

24. The UNPFII affirms that indigenous women must play an equal role in indigenous communities. Thus, the UNPFII is deeply alarmed that young women in indigenous communities are marginalized and socially excluded hence limiting their capabilities and opportunities to access education and enjoy the right to education.

II. Mandate

25. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established by the Economic and Social Council through resolution 2000/22 to serve as an advisory body to the Council with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues within the mandate of the Council relating to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. In the exercise of its functions, the Permanent Forum is tasked to provide expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the Council, as well as to programs, funds and agencies of the United Nations, through the Council; to raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities relating to indigenous issues within the United Nations system; and to prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues.

A. CULTURALLY SENSITIVE EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

26. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is fully aware of the need of language preservation in order to improve the access to education for indigenous people and thus recommends that language immersion schools be identified as public schools.

27. The UNPFII recommends all Member States who have indigenous students in their public school systems to create a permanent project called FAME (Focusing on Accessible Minority Education). FAME will focus on protecting the right indigenous students have to discrimination free education within public schools. The FAME model should follow a bottom-up approach in the development of appropriate curriculum best fit for indigenous students.

28. This Forum recommends Member States who have indigenous students within public schools to design a cultural protocol to guide the development of culturally sensitive curriculum in public schools in order to better include indigenous students.

29. The cultural protocol is aimed at protecting the tribal identity and traditions of indigenous communities and combating negative stereotypes and representations. The protocols provide a framework of ethical principles to interpret curriculum development and promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship amongst students.

30. The curriculum should consist of the education of indigenous language, when possible, and the instruction of significant cultural skills and practices.

31. The UNPFII suggests always including indigenous representatives into the designing process of the curriculum in order for them to guide the development of the culturally specific
curriculum and offer ongoing input through consultation between state governments and indigenous communities.

32. In order to ensure the fight against discrimination, this forum also recommends each Member State to monitor the success of the implementation through annual polling of indigenous students about their experience in the classroom settings.

**B. PROMOTING THE PARTICIPATION AND COOPERATION OF INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATES**

33. United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) recommends the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to consider the creation of a subcommittee of UNPFII, which focuses on the multifaceted challenges in relation to the education of indigenous children.

34. This subcommittee shall be an annual forum to be called the Forum on Indigenous Rights and Education (FIRE), which will act as a platform for indigenous communities to present their problems regarding education and to then receive advice, awareness, funding and recommendations from the committees and NGOs to best solve their specific issue. This forum acts solely as a discussion and advisory forum for indigenous groups looking to improve issues regarding education, and is not a voting body.

35. FIRE will utilize the standing UNPFII representatives. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should be encouraged to participate in FIRE. NGOs, with consultation of the indigenous communities, will be responsible for reporting issues they encounter regarding indigenous education such as but not limited to:

a. Recognition of indigenous peoples to allow access to rights granted to them through the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child (UNDRC);

b. Protecting the rights of indigenous peoples to establish and control educational systems and methods and to receive an education in their indigenous language, as established in Article 14 of UNDRIP.

36. United Nations Funds and Programs, as well as specialized agencies such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), and the United Nations Educational, and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are recommended to participate in FIRE in order to offer their expertise and to increase the inter-organizational communication and cooperation between UN bodies, agencies and NGOs. The committee representatives are responsible for relaying the information obtained at FIRE to their respective committees.

37. All indigenous communities who seek to participate in the forum will be required to register for the opportunity to speak about the challenges facing their communities. The number of speakers should be limited to 2 per region based on the regions as specified by UNPFII.
38. Under the registration process prospective speakers should submit a summary outlining their presentation. This summary can be the basis for selecting the speakers determined and voted on by UNPFII to ensure multiple aspects are addressed. The summaries that are not chosen to be presented will be sent to the inter-organizational bodies participating in FIRE. Recommendations based on all summaries will be compiled, published and distributed to all involved parties.

39. To ensure equal representation without regard to financial circumstance, selected speakers may access a travel allowance through the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Issues.

40. UNPFII also recommends that Member States, NGO’s, and indigenous representatives who participate in FIRE be included on the agenda of the United Nations World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. This conception would create awareness of indigenous educational issues within the scope of the participating affiliates.

41. UNPFII calls on the expertise and experience of UN partners working in the respective fields such as Teachers Without Borders (TWB), Oxfam and BRAC in solving the challenges faced by indigenous people when educating their children. The diversity of the committees involved will embody all pertinent problems associated with the development of indigenous communities.

C. CREATION OF TRAINING CENTRES FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

42. In order to ensure indigenous communities are offered sufficient access to customized education of high standards, UNPFII recommends Member States to provide prospective teachers for indigenous communities’ formal certification, qualification, and training opportunities.

43. UNPFII recommends Member States to create Indigenous Training and Education Centres (ITECs) located in large, centralized communities throughout Member States, easily accessible to indigenous peoples. These Centres would be created by individual Member State governments in cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), and should operate abiding the principles dictated in Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and Article 7 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

44. These ITECs would be coordinated by existing NGOs operating in nations with indigenous populations. Programs that reflect methods employed in other nations should be altered to reflect the perspective of indigenous communities being served.

45. These ITECs would be established via state-offered or sanctioned certification programs and institutions. These institutions would ensure that instructors assigned to indigenous regions are formally qualified, enabling indigenous instructors to convey non-indigenous methods of education, through a traditionally indigenous pedagogical focus.
46. Indigenous instructors trained in ITECs would be assigned to their own communities, other indigenous communities, and non-indigenous communities. Non-indigenous instructors may be assigned to indigenous regions only.

47. Henceforth, these ITECs would encourage the education of indigenous-based subjects in both indigenous and non-indigenous communities. This reciprocal method of instruction will enable both indigenous and non-indigenous students to be educated on disparate and different cultures of their country.

48. All instructors trained at ITECs will undergo further consultation, and if necessary, localized training with local indigenous leaders and/or existing instructors in the communities they serve prior to commencing their work. Lesson plans that would be taught by the instructor must be reviewed and approved by the indigenous representatives, and if requested, lesson plans presented may be revised at the discretion of local indigenous communities and their representatives.

49. Administered by a consortium of NGOs and IGOs, these funds will be granted to Member States showing a deficiency in achieving the objectives laid out by UNDRIP and the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

50. Member States, in order to ensure full financing and implementation of the ITECs and their objectives, would also be encouraged to cooperate and consult interested parties such as:

a. United Nations Funds and Programs, and/or specialized agencies including, but not limited to the United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);

b. Nongovernmental Organizations, such as, but not limited to Teachers Without Borders, Oxfam, and Save the Children.

D. PROTECTING AND PRESERVING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES THROUGH EDUCATION

51. UNPFII acknowledges the good work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which is presently involved in bilingual education for indigenous children through the Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) program currently practiced in Mexico, Paraguay, Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala and Bolivia. UNPFII suggests all Member States, NGO’s, and indigenous communities to cooperate in the expansion of the IBE program. The forum proposes reforming the IBE program to include the methods of the Master Apprentice Program instituted by New Zealand that utilizes multigenerational speakers as means to preserve indigenous languages simultaneously teaching the national language.
52. UNPFII further recommends the preservation of indigenous peoples’ identity by recognizing their cultural and linguistic makeup. This forum invites Member States to follow the successful model of the IBE for the preservation of indigenous languages.

53. UNPFII recognizes the past actions of Member States aimed at reviving indigenous languages on the brink of extinction, such as the implementation of Kura Kaupapa Maori language immersion schools in New Zealand, which have lead to the successful revitalization of indigenous language.

54. Recent success of indigenous communities in areas throughout the world in implementing language immersion schools aimed at teaching both traditional and contemporary educational curricula in indigenous languages. Existing language immersion schools have proven to be highly effective in reviving indigenous language and ensuring it for future generations. Language immersion schools raise educational outcomes and academic success rates for indigenous children, as proven by the language immersion school established on the Ojibwa reservation in the United States of America.

55. To ensure that bilingual efforts are capable in communities where indigenous populations are not the overwhelming majority, UNPFII further proposes the expansion of reciprocal-learning lesson plans in bilingual schools. Together, indigenous students would educate and lead their non-indigenous peers in lessons involving subjects such as language and cultural education, and vice-versa. In non-bilingual schools, the same method may be applied to indigenous and non-indigenous curricula. By demonstrating the applicability of lessons to their fellow students, such reciprocal programs would foster tolerance and diversity in mixed communities.

56. All lesson plans involving indigenous knowledge must be reviewed and submitted to local indigenous representatives and if requested, changed to accustom the performances of the indigenous representatives. Additionally, all other matters concerning indigenous language and cultural preservation should be addressed with full consultation of local indigenous representatives.

E. RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FOR EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENT

57. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) encourages Member States to promote social talks and dialogues which will focus on the comprehensive review and expansion of the definition of the term “indigenous peoples.” These social talks and dialogues will seek to foster the exchange of ideas, beliefs, and perspectives between the State and its indigenous peoples. Consequently, these inputs will be vital in generating an expanded definition of “indigenous peoples.”

58. The social talks and dialogues shall be open to indigenous people’s organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Particularly, these social talks and dialogues
will seek to advocate the principles of equality, respect for cultural uniqueness, and mutual cooperation for the purpose of maximizing synergies and reducing dissonance among all actors.

59. The UNPFII recommends each indigenous population to create a body of indigenous leaders chosen by their people, based on their geographic location and distinguished by cultural belonging. This representative body will advocate on behalf of its specific community by setting an agenda of priorities to address different aspects of education for the further development and preservation of their indigenous peoples and cultures.

60. Because of the lack of communication between States and their indigenous peoples, services that are already in place are not accessible. Therefore, UNPFII recommends the establishment of a liaison between the two that is recognized by both the state and its indigenous groups.

61. The UNPFII also recommends Member States with an indigenous population to consider the creation of an Agency of Indigenous Affairs within their State. This agency will act as a liaison to promote the interest of the local representative bodies of indigenous leaders by linking them to existing programs and services of other State Ministries such as the Ministry of Transportation. UNPFII believes that the establishment of such a chain of communication would resolve the educational disparities the indigenous communities face.

62. The UNPFII asserts that improvements at all levels are necessary in order to level out educational disparities facing indigenous children, such as a lack of access to education, a lack of teachers, and a lack of school materials. UNPFII believes that state legislative action on behalf of indigenous populations is necessary to improve access to education among the indigenous children and thereby enhance their collective rights, and acknowledges that Member States have begun to work on resolving this issue.

63. There is a need for an explicit clause within the constitution of each Member State, in which indigenous populations reside, that will establish the collective and individual rights of indigenous peoples.

64. UNPFII calls upon Member States to stage talks and social dialogues centered on empowerment of young indigenous women. The purpose of the activities is to raise awareness about the benefits of accessing and exercising education for indigenous women.

65. The talks and social dialogues will be open to young indigenous women; accomplished and famed female icons in the field of education, whether local or international; government ministers; concerned Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); and regional organizations. They shall be held in consultation with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) with the objective of reversing discriminatory practices against women, and advancing capabilities and opportunities for indigenous women in terms of accessing education.