

Dear friends,

Please find below two important news concerning the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people.

A. Renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people

On 28 September 2007, the Human Rights Council, during its sixth session, decided to renew for an additional period of three years the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people. The unedited version of the relevant resolution, so far only available in English, is attached, along with a copy of the Special Rapporteur's oral statement to the Council.

The Council's new resolution, whose unedited version is attached, reaffirms and reinforces the Special Rapporteur's mandate as described in previous resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights, in areas such as the Special Rapporteur's official visits, communications, and annual reporting.

The Council's resolution further includes a number of important innovations in relationship to previous resolutions, including the following:

- The resolution entrusts the Special Rapporteur with the follow-up of the recently adopted UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, along with other relevant international standards.
- The resolution invites the Special Rapporteur to work in close cooperation with the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and to participate in its annual session.
- The resolution invites the Special Rapporteur to identify, exchange and promote best practices in the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.
- The resolution calls the Special Rapporteur to pay a particular attention to the situation of indigenous women and children, and to apply a gender perspective in his/her work.

The current mandate-holder, Mr Rodolfo Stavenhagen from Mexico, will finish his term at Council's resumed session in December 2007, when he will also present his final report. In order to avoid a protection gap, he will retain the mandate until the appointment of the new mandate-holder, initially expected in March 2008.

B. Report to the UN General Assembly

On 22 October 2007, the Special Rapporteur will present his fourth annual report to the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. The report, now available in all UN official languages, presents an interim description of the activities carried out this year by the Special Rapporteur. In addition, the Special Rapporteur's report includes a number of general considerations on the situation of indigenous peoples in Asia, a region to which the Special Rapporteur has devoted a special attention during the last year.

Luis Rodríguez-Piñero Royo
Human Rights Officer
Special Procedures Branch
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland
Tel. + 41 - 22 917 91 34; fax + 41 - 22 917 60 10
Email: lrodriguez-pinero@ohchr.org