

Meetings on the future of the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples in December 2007

- 4-5 and 7 (afternoon) December 2007: Indigenous Peoples' Caucus
- 6-7 (morning) December 2007: informal meeting between Indigenous Peoples and States
- 10-14 December 2007: 2nd part of the 6th session of the Human Rights Council.

While the Special Rapporteur's mandate has been easily extended and the other Working Groups of the former Sub-Commission have their future secured, the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples does not yet have a successor.

In order for a new Expert Group on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to be created, an informal meeting between States and indigenous delegations will be held on December 6th (all day) and 7th (morning only). A meeting of the Indigenous Caucus on Tuesday the 4th and Wednesday the 5th of December will precede it. This meeting must draft the resolution to be adopted by the HRC during its 6th session, which will be held the following week (10-14 December) as stipulated in resolution [A/HRC/6/L.35](#).

This meeting is the result of extensive lobbying carried out throughout the first year of the Council on the part of the indigenous delegation, composed namely of the International Indian Treaty Council, the International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development (IOIRD – Canada), the Legal Commission for the Development of Native Andean Peoples (CAPAJ – Peru), Eastern Door (Canada), the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (FAIRA – Australia), the Indigenous Regional Council of Cauca (CRIC – Colombia), and the Ngobe-Bugle Center for Education (CEDHUNG – Panama). Through its efforts, this delegation has been able to maintain indigenous issues on the agenda. Without this delegation, the successor of the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples would have been written off, just like the WGIP itself.

When making propositions to States, indigenous delegates must bear the following in mind:

1) We have not yet obtained the creation of an Indigenous Expert Group subsidiary to the Human Rights Council. In order to achieve this goal, extensive lobbying is necessary (as until mid-September 2007, the majority of the indigenous delegation's time and attention had been focused on the process of getting the declaration adopted in New York). It is imperative that indigenous delegations plan to stay for the full week of the Human Rights Council (10-14 December).

2) The Indigenous Expert Group must be subsidiary to the Council or, at least, must not report to the Expert Advice Body of the Human Rights Council, which replaced the Sub-Commission. The Expert Advice Body lost important competencies with regard to the former Sub-Commission, such as that of deciding upon the subjects it would address. In other words, an Indigenous Expert Group reporting to the Expert Advice Body might not be authorized to choose which issues pertaining to indigenous peoples' rights it examines.

3) The Indigenous Expert Group will not be approved unless it:

- **is innovative** with respect to the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples of the former Sub-Commission,
- **avoids all forms of duplication** with other existing mechanisms, including the Special Rapporteur, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Advice Body of the HRC and the Treaty Bodies.
- **finds States to present and sponsor the resolution.**

The discussions within the framework of the Indigenous Caucus and with the States will need to be concrete and to propose realistic solutions. We urge indigenous delegates to listen to the indigenous persons who have worked on this subject for the past year and to be fully prepared for this meeting. To this end, they may use the articles published in issues number 70, 71-72, 73-4, and 75 of the Update, as well as our website, section Human Rights Council. There they will find (1) the declarations of the Global Indigenous Caucus and indigenous organizations on this subject; (2) among the sessions of the HRC, in the 6th session, the documents posted under item 5 of the agenda are particularly relevant.

For practical information (accreditation, funds, etc.) please consult the website of the [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#)