



*CONCEPT NOTE*

*Event to Mark the Tenth Anniversary of the Adoption of the United Nations  
Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

13 – 14 September 2017  
Boulder, Colorado

*Introduction*

The Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues/DSPD/DESA and the University of Colorado Law School are pleased to co-host an event to mark the Tenth Anniversary of the Adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Declaration). The event will commemorate and recognize the efforts by indigenous peoples, States and others in the drafting of the Declaration, celebrate its adoption by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 September 2007, review its implementation over the past decade, and look forward to its continued use as an international instrument to uphold the collective and individual rights of indigenous peoples.

*Background*

The adoption of the Declaration marked a monumental moment of global recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples as it established a universal framework of minimum standards to advocate for the self-determination, dignity, and well-being of indigenous peoples around the world. This event is a true celebration of the work done to implement the Declaration locally, nationally, and globally.

The event is timed to reflect on past accomplishments, to provide insight into current streams of advocacy, and to develop an agenda to guide ongoing work. The expected outcome of the event is a catalogue of good practices that can be transferred to assist indigenous peoples in all regions, and at every level of advocacy, to expedite implementation of the Declaration through 2027.

*Activities*

The speakers and moderators at this event have all worked, or are currently working, within the United Nations to advance the rights of indigenous peoples. The entire event is open to the public and expected attendees include indigenous peoples' and government representatives, advocates, scholars, and the public.

There will be two days of events. Day 1 will be a series of plenary sessions where panelists will provide their perspectives and background on several given themes. Day 1 will culminate with a cultural celebration to commemorate the remarkable work done every day by indigenous peoples and advocates to uphold indigenous rights. Day 2 will be a series of workshops designed to facilitate dialogue about particular topics, learn about good practices in the field, and create a catalogue of good practices as to implementation of the Declaration.

### *Day 1*

**MAKING THE DECLARATION:** In this panel, participants will hear from several people who worked on the Declaration from its inception to full adoption at the United Nations General Assembly in 2007. Many of these stakeholders worked for decades to gather support and ensure that the Declaration adequately represented the rights of indigenous peoples. The focus of this panel will be to better understand the genesis of the Declaration and to commemorate the work done to bring the Declaration to successful passage.

**FIRESIDE CHAT:** This session will provide participants with an intimate look at the work done by two of the three United Nations Special Rapporteurs on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. With deep appreciation for his work and in memory of Dr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, former Special Rapporteur, S. James Anaya and current Special Rapporteur Victoria Tauli-Corpuz will provide insight into their work advocating for the rights set forth the Declaration on local, national, and international scales. Participants will be able to hear about the successes and challenges of this unique position serving as a liaison in the United Nations system for indigenous peoples.

**IMPLEMENTATION OVER TEN YEARS:** This panel will provide multiple perspectives on the implementation of the Declaration over the last decade. Speakers come from diverse backgrounds and global regions, and all have worked with and through the United Nations in a variety of capacities. The focus of the panel will be to review the success and challenges of advocating on behalf of indigenous peoples in the United Nations system, and to describe the best and most challenging uses of the Declaration in doing so.

**THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (2014) AND MOVING FORWARD:** This panel will provide an in-depth discussion of the work done at the first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014, aspirations that were not totally reflected in the Outcome Document but most importantly discuss how the implementation of the Outcome Document can change the lives of indigenous peoples at country and regional levels. Again, speakers come from a variety of global regions and backgrounds, and will provide multiple perspectives to better understand the positive impacts of the Declaration in current conversations. The panel will set up further discussion for Day 2 by considering emerging issues, good practices, and current debates moving forward.

**CELEBRATION:** The event agenda will turn to a celebration of indigenous peoples worldwide and the work that they and their advocates have done to forward the Declaration. Guests are invited to join the hosts to participate in a cultural celebration and to enjoy dinner in the courtyard of Wolf Law Building, weather permitting.

### *Day 2*

**OBJECTIVES OF DAY 2 WORKSHOPS:** The main aim of the workshops on Day 2 is to identify forward-looking strategies and priorities to strengthen the implementation of the Declaration at a regional and country level over the next ten years. The workshops will draw on the joint

experiences of indigenous peoples from all over the world and, as such, speakers represent indigenous peoples from every global region.

**WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY:** The participants will be divided into six groups and each group will focus their discussion on a specific sub-section of the Declaration in order to crystalize good practices and concrete initiatives which are transferrable to other indigenous communities, and to catalogue those practices further the implementation of the Declaration. Participants will dialogue with their sub-group throughout the day and the conversation will take place in three phases:

- 1) Mapping What Worked: Discussion leaders will present their work and provide perspectives on the good practices that they see in the constitutional, legal, policy, judicial, civil or other initiatives that have been developed to implement the Declaration.
- 2) Transfer of Good Practices: Discussion leaders will facilitate dialogue with participants to discuss the necessary conditions and facilitating factors that ensure the transfer of good practices in implementation between contexts.
- 3) Strategies to Move Forward: Building on the discussions from the day, participants will identify existing gaps in implementation as well as emerging issues and describe what needs to be done, by whom, and by when to move the agenda forward.

**FINAL PLENARY SESSION:** At the final plenary session, brief reports from each group will be shared allowing all participants to see the multiple channels of advocacy that will guide full implementation of the Declaration in the next decade. The expected outcome of the workshops is a catalogue of good practices to be transferred and strategic ideas to expedite the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples over the next decade until 2027.

**WORKSHOP GROUPS:** The groups for the workshops are as follows, and discussion leaders may choose from any one of the listed topics to drive conversation and dialogue:

**Group 1: Human Rights, Equality and the Right to Development**

Highlighted articles (in short):

- Full enjoyment of all human rights - Article 1.
- Freedom and equality to all other peoples and individuals - Article 2.
- Collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples - Article 7.
- Prevention of propaganda designed to promote racial or ethnic discrimination against indigenous peoples - Article 8.
- Promotion of tolerance and understanding among indigenous and non-indigenous - Article 15.
- Right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development - Article 23.

## **Group 2: Self-Determination**

### Highlighted articles (in short):

- Right to self-determination - Article 3.
- Right to freely pursue economic, social and cultural development - Article 3.
- Right to maintain and strengthen distinct political, social and cultural institutions - Article 5.
- Right to maintain and strengthen their distinct legal, economic, and cultural institutions - Article 5.
- Right to administer economic and social programmes through their own institutions - Article 23.
- Right to develop, maintain their institutional structures, customs, spirituality, traditions - Article 34.
- Right to develop, maintain their institutional structures, judicial systems – Article 34.

## **Group 3: Participation in Decision Making and Consultation**

### Highlighted articles (in short):

- States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them - Article 19.
- Right to be actively involved in developing, determining health programmes affecting them - Article 23.
- Right to be actively involved in developing, determining housing programmes affecting them - Article 23.
- Right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their (indigenous peoples') lands or territories and other resources - Article 32.
- States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources - Article 32.

## **Group 4: Lands, Territories and Resources**

### Highlighted articles (in short):

- Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories – Article 10.
- Right to maintain and strengthen spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned lands - Article 25.
- Right to the lands, territories, resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied - Article 26.
- Right to redress, compensation for territories, resources that have been taken, occupied - Article 28.
- No storage, disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in lands, territories of indigenous peoples without their consent - Article 29.

- Military activities shall not take place in indigenous peoples' lands, territories unless justified by public interest - Article 30.
- Right to determine priorities, strategies for the development, use of their lands, resources - Article 32.
- States shall obtain indigenous peoples' free and informed consent prior to approval of projects affecting their lands - Article 32.

### **Group 5: Indigenous Cultures, Traditional Knowledge and Identities**

#### Highlighted articles (in short):

- Right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture – Article 8.
- Right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs - Article 11.
- Right to revitalize & transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions. - Article 13.
- Right to establish their own media in their own languages - Article 16.
- Right to maintain, control, protect develop intellectual property over traditional knowledge - Article 31.
- Right to determine their own identity in accordance with their customs, traditions - Article 33.

### **Group 6: Education and Health**

#### Highlighted articles (in short):

- Right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions - Article 14.
- Right to provide education in their own languages, appropriate to their methods of teaching - Article 14.
- Right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions - Article 14.
- Equal right to the enjoyment of highest attainable standard of physical, mental health - Article 24.
- Right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices - Article 24.