



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

13 June, 2014

Excellency,

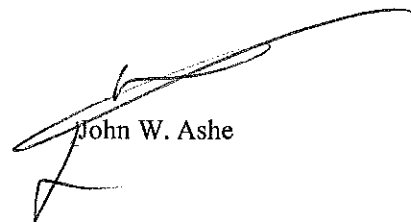
I have the honour to refer to Resolution 66/296 of the United Nations General Assembly, entitled Organization of the high-level plenary meeting of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. This resolution, as you know, outlined the arrangements for the World Conference and conferred on the 68<sup>th</sup> Presidency the responsibility for finalizing the attendant organizational modalities.

As we advance the preparatory process for the World Conference in September, I have the pleasure to inform you that I will convene an informal interactive hearing on Tuesday, 17 June from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and on Wednesday, 18 June from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This interactive hearing provides an informal setting in which Member States, representatives of Indigenous Peoples, representatives of UN entities, civil society, and academia can exchange views, and make constructive proposals that will inform the preparation of the outcome document for the World Conference.

Attached is a copy of the Concept Note for the Interactive Hearing, which is also available on my website at: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/68/events/wcip/shtml>. A detailed draft Programme will be circulated in due course.

In order to benefit from the wide range of views of Member States, Indigenous Peoples, civil society and UN system entities, I extend an invitation to your delegation. Member States are encouraged to support this hearing, and provide any inputs that will contribute to shaping the outcome document.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



John W. Ashe

To All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York



**Informal interactive hearing**

**Organizational arrangements for the World  
Conference on Indigenous Peoples**

17-18 June 2014

**General Assembly Hall  
United Nations, NY**

**Concept note**

## Background

1. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples<sup>1</sup> (the Declaration), adopted by the General Assembly in 2007, is considered a milestone in the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples. It is the result of an open and inclusive process of dialogue and negotiations among and between member states and indigenous peoples. The General Assembly sought to continue and build on this achievement by 'deciding to organize a high level plenary meeting ... to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, to be held in 2014'<sup>2</sup>. This reflected the ongoing 'concern' of the General Assembly, 'about the extreme disadvantages that indigenous peoples have typically faced across a range of social and economic indicators and about the impediments to their full enjoyment of their rights'<sup>3</sup>.

2. The General Assembly adopted a modalities resolution<sup>4</sup> in 2012, which provides clear guidance for the organisation of the World Conference. The resolution conferred on the 68<sup>th</sup> President of the General Assembly the responsibility of organising the World Conference, and most importantly, the preparation of a concise and action oriented outcome document<sup>5</sup>. The President of the General Assembly has been attentive to the provisions of the modalities resolution and understands the importance of achieving consensus among both member states and indigenous peoples on the outcome document.

3. To assist his consultations and in the preparation of the outcome document, the President of the General Assembly has appointed two Ambassadorial Advisers, the Permanent Representatives of Costa Rica and Slovenia and two indigenous advisers, Dr. Mirna Cunningham and Mr. Lez Malezer.

4. The modalities resolution also requested that the President of the General Assembly organize an informal interactive hearing, no later than June 2014, with indigenous peoples' organizations, academic institutions, national human rights institutions, parliamentarians, civil society and non-governmental organizations, to provide valuable input into the preparatory process for the World Conference.

## Objectives

5. The main objective of the 17-18 June 2014 interactive dialogue is to further the open and inclusive consultations among member states and indigenous peoples that will inform the World Conference outcome document.

6. Following the interactive dialogue, the President of the General Assembly will prepare a zero draft and share it with member states and indigenous peoples for their consideration. An additional consultation will be held in early July to enable member states and representatives of indigenous peoples to share their views on the zero draft.

7. On the basis of these views, and with the assistance of the Advisers, a revised draft document will serve as the basis for moving forward with further consultations.

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/61/295.

<sup>2</sup> A/RES/65/198, paragraph 8.

<sup>3</sup> A/RES/65/198, preamble.

<sup>4</sup> A/RES/66/296.

<sup>5</sup> A/RES/66/296, paragraph 9.

## Participation

8. A wide range of representatives from indigenous peoples' organizations, academic institutions, national human rights institutions, parliamentarians, civil society and non-governmental organizations, as well as UN agencies and Departments are expected to attend the informal hearing.

9. A registration process has been organized by the NGO Branch of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which will enable the aforementioned representatives to pre-register for the hearing<sup>6</sup>. Registration will close at 12pm on Friday 13 June.

10. Member States and Permanent Observers are encouraged to attend and participate in, as appropriate, the informal interactive hearing.

## Format

11. The President of the General Assembly has proposed the following format for the one and a half day (17-18 June) informal interactive hearing:

### Day 1                      *17 June 2014*

- An Opening session will begin with a welcome prayer. Remarks for the President of the General Assembly will follow. An invitation has also been extended to Ms Soyata Maiga, a Commissioner on African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights to speak at the opening session.
- Two themed interactive discussions will feature on Day 1. H. E. Ambassador Andrej Logar, Member State Adviser to the President of the General Assembly, will moderate the first discussion and Mr. Les Malezer, Indigenous Adviser to the President of the General Assembly will moderate the second discussion. Each discussion will have two panellists, one expert presenter and one representative from a member state. The moderator will open each session with a brief presentation (5 mins) and introduce the panellists. The panellists will then each make a short presentation (5-10 mins), which will be followed by an interactive discussion, led by the moderator. The moderator will ensure regional and gender balance from the floor. Participants will request the opportunity to take the floor, during discussion. At the midway point in discussion, the moderator will allow panellists the opportunity to reply to the issues raised and to ask questions of participants to guide the remainder of the discussion. A rapporteur will take notes of the session and the moderator will offer summary remarks (5 minutes) to close the session.
- Day 1 will end with a closing session to allow time for member states and representatives of indigenous people to make short statements (2-3 minutes) on the conference outcome document or to address any issues arising from the day's discussion. This session will be moderated by Mr. Les Malezer.

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<sup>6</sup> More information is available at: <http://esango.un.org/irene/?page=viewContent&nr=24263&type=8&section=8>

Day 2            *18 June 2014 (morning only)*

- Day 2 will commence with a final themed interactive discussion moderated by Dr Mirna Cunningham, Indigenous adviser to the President of the General Assembly. Working arrangements will be the same as discussions held on Day 1.
- Day 2 will end with a lengthy closing session to allow further time for member states and representatives of indigenous people to make short statements (2-3 minutes) on the conference outcome document or to address any issues arising from the day's discussion. This final discussion will be moderated by H. E. Ambassador Eduardo Ulibarri-Bilbao, Member State Adviser to the President of the General Assembly.

**Outcome**

12. The President of the General Assembly will develop a summary of the main outcomes of the informal interactive hearing. This will help inform the development of a zero-draft of the World Conference outcome document.

**Issues to be discussed**

Interactive discussion 1 (1040 - 1300, 17 June 2014)

*Topic: "Indigenous peoples' lands, territories, resources, oceans and waters".*

13. This discussion will examine indigenous peoples' right of self-determination and permanent sovereignty over lands, territories, resources, oceans and waters. It will consider how to establish effective mechanisms through agreements reached between states and indigenous peoples to effectively implement these rights. The following question will guide the interactive discussion:

1. What legal and policy changes need to be made in order to promote and protect indigenous peoples' rights to their lands, territories and resources?

Interactive discussion 2 (15.00 - 17.30, 17 June 2014)

*Topic: "Implementation of the rights of Indigenous Peoples".*

14. This discussion will focus on how to ensure that regional, constitutional, federal/national, provincial and local laws, policies and procedures comply with the Declaration and other international human rights standards that uphold the rights of indigenous peoples. It will also consider potential actions under the United Nations system for the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples. The following questions will guide the discussion:

1. What needs to be done to promote the implementation of the Declaration at the national and local level?
2. What are some concrete steps that the United Nations system can take to improve the way it works with and for indigenous peoples?

Interactive discussion 3 (10.00 - 12.00, 18 June 2014)

*Topic: "Indigenous priorities for sustainable development".*

15. This discussion will consider indigenous peoples' priorities for sustainable development, predicated on the full, equal and effective recognition of indigenous rights to lands, territories, resources, oceans and waters, and the connection between customs, belief systems, values, languages, cultures and traditional knowledge. The following question will guide the discussion:

1. What are indigenous peoples priorities/visions for sustainable development and how can these priorities/visions be included in national development planning as well as the international post 2015 development agenda?

16. Cross cutting themes for all of the discussions will include the rights of indigenous women, the young, older people, and people with disabilities.

**Media arrangements**

17. Accredited correspondents may cover the interactive hearing. The hearing will also be broadcast through a live webcast, which will be publicly accessible at <http://webtv.un.org>

**Webpage**

18. A web page for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples has been established on the President of the General Assembly's website:  
<http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/68/events/wcip.shtml>

19. This web page contains links to important documents that may inform the World Conference outcome document, as well as the event programme for the 17-18 June interactive hearing.

20. An input form has also been set up where interested parties can comment on the issues to be discussed at the interactive hearing (Deadline 15 June):  
[http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/68/events/wcip\\_inputs.asp](http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/68/events/wcip_inputs.asp)