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[Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [Archive](#) | [Send Us News](#) | [Photo Gallery](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Guest Book](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Sitemap](#)

English Edition Section

Inside This:

यस भित्रका खुराकहरु:

संपादकीय Editorial
साताको कुराकानी Interview
साताको दोहोरी भाका
साताको अनुहार
साप्ताहिक झटारो
हाम्रो बोली

Feature Story / News

स्थानीय खबरहरु

Local News

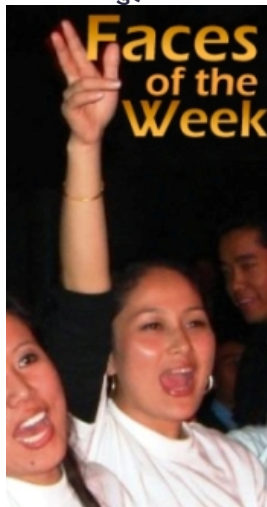
नेपालका खबरहरु

News from Nepal

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय खबरहरु

International News

साताको अनुहार



Faces of the Week

Upcoming Events in USA

न्यूयॉर्कमा आगामी कार्यक्रमहरु

Upcoming Events in NYC

न्यूयॉर्क शहरमा एक साँझ

An Evening Out in New York

न्यूयॉर्कका नेपाली संघ-संस्थाहरु

Nepalese Orgs in NYC

न्यूयॉर्कमा नेपाली ब्यावसायहरु

Nepalese Business in NYC

अमेरिकामा नेपाली संस्थाहरु

Nepalese Orgs in USA

अमेरिकामा नेपाली ब्यावसायहरु

Nepalese Business in USA

समकालिन साहित्य-रचना

Contemporary Writings

कविता Poetry

मनोरञ्जन Entertainment

दोहोरी लोक भाकाहरु सुनौं

Nepalese Folk Music & Dance

बर्गिकृत विज्ञापन Classified

पाठक प्रतिक्रिया

News from New York: UNPFII Seventh Session April 21-May 2, 2008

World's Indigenous Voices Echo at UN



www.usnepalonline.com

Photos & illustration: eEyeCam

Challenges of the 21st Century-2

World's Indigenous Voices Echo at United Nations Headquarters in New York



Participants at the seventh session.

New York, April 21, 2008-The 10-day seventh session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) began here today in UN Headquarters in New York City, convened under the theme "Climate change, bio-cultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges."

There were an unprecedented 3,300 vibrant and colourful Indigenous People attending from around the world. The organizers of this session were more jubilant than ever as they were hosting this session for the first time since the United Nations General Assembly finally adopted the landmark United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, September 13, 2007.

Nepalese Delegation

There are 18 Nepalese delegation members participating the UNPFII 7th session. They are (1) Local Development Minister Dev Gurung, (2) MP Vijaya Subba, (3) Dr. Chaitanya Subba, National Planning Commission, (4) Dr Krishna B. Bhattachan & (5) Nima Lama, Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), (6) Jitpal Kirati, Vice Chairman National Foundation of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN), (7) Tana Gautam, Secretary, Government of Nepal, (8) Ganga Datta Awasthi, Secretary, Ministry of Local Development (MoLD), (9) Baburam Gautam, Under-Secretary, MoLD, (10) Nabin Subba & (11) Solomon Rajbansi (ILO), (12) Lakki Sherpa, National Network of Indigenous Women Nepal, (13) Sita Gurung, Executive member, NFDIN, (14) Member, Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations, (15) Shankar Subba, LAHURNIP, (16) Indira Chongbang, Association of Nepalese Indigenous Journalists (ANIJ), (17) Chanda Pun Magar, Pewa Nepal and (18) Khim Ghale, (ANIJ & OHCHR).

Readers' Comments

पुराना कुराहरु News Archive
Audio Archive
Video Archive

बिबिध Miscellaneous

नेपालका आदिवासी-जनजातिहरु
Indigenous People of Nepal
प्रवासी नेपाली संस्थाहरु
Nepali Diaspora Orgs

Nepali News Media
नेपाली पत्रपत्रिकाहरु
दैनिक Daily
साप्ताहिक Weekly
Monthly & Other Media
Nepali Online Portals
Nepali Radio / F.M. / TV
नेपाली अनलाइन पोर्टल

The Big Challenge

The big challenge now is to encourage those governments who ratified the declaration to swiftly implement the rights of Indigenous Peoples by protecting their cultures, traditional territories, indigenous knowledge and mother languages.



President Evo Morales of Bolivia

In the first ever address to the UNPFII Session by a Head of State, President Evo Morales of Bolivia urged the development of a model based on “how to live well”, to counter an economic system where the thirst for wealth has overwhelmed respect for sustainable living.

President Morales proposed a set of “10 commandments” that would offer an alternative to “egoism, regionalism and the pursuit of luxury”.

The President said UNPFII members share the call for an end to the current economic system, where, he said, fossil fuels were being pillaged to fuel luxury motor vehicles. The world should denounce wars and be rid of imperialism and unfair competition among nations. He said the Security Council should be democratized, and questioned the validity of having lifelong Council members with veto power over rotating members.

President Morales talked about basic necessities such as the need to maintain full access to water, to be guaranteed by an international convention as a matter of human right.

He urged people to consume only what was necessary and locally produced, to uphold unity in diversity, and to live well, but not at the expense of others.



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

In a video message to the session, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said "This session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues meets at a historic crossroads. With the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Permanent Forum takes on a new role. You will work to translate the Declaration into a living document at the national and international levels. As you do, you will promote the United Nations development agenda and its vision of development for all. This includes the poorest and most vulnerable, a group to which many indigenous peoples belong."

He continued, "I applaud your choice of climate change as the special theme of this session. Indigenous peoples live in many of the world's most biologically diverse areas. As custodians of these lands, they have accumulated deep, first-hand knowledge about the impacts of environmental degradation, including climate

change. They know the economic and social consequences, and they can and should play a role in the global response."

He reminded the audience that this is the International Year of Languages, saying "Indigenous languages represent an overwhelming majority of all languages spoken today, with most facing the threat of extinction. By protecting and promoting indigenous languages, we advance the dignity and human rights of indigenous people, and preserve the cultural diversity of all humankind."



Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson of the UNPFII

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson of the UNPFII said the Forum had yet to be invited by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to participate in its process to create a new climate change framework. Both the problem of climate change and its solution were concerns for indigenous peoples, she said, who - according to a World Bank report - contributed the "smallest ecological footprints" on Earth, but suffered the worst impacts from climate change and mitigation measures, such as the loss of land to bio-fuel production.

She added that, as stewards of diversity with their ecological knowledge, indigenous peoples could significantly contribute to the development of sustainable measures and helping move the world towards low-carbon and sustainable communities.

She announced that there will be a discussion later this week regarding the 2008 International Year of Languages. A discussion of the Pacific is being considered, because the region has now given rise to the phenomenon of "environmental refugees", those forced to leave small island States that were sinking due to rising sea levels.

Léo Merores of Haiti, President of the Economic and Social Council, also spoke, while Jomo Kwama Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, delivered a welcome address on behalf of Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

Other speakers were Bernie Yates, Deputy Secretary of Australia's Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and Gunilla Olsson, Executive Director of the Action Plan of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Change Management, who spoke on behalf of IFAD President Lennart Båge.

The UNPFII's seventh session opened with an invocation by Tracy L. Shenandoah, Chief of the Chief of Councils of the Onondaga Nation, Eel Clan.

An estimated 370 million Indigenous Peoples dwell in more than 70 countries around the world. According to International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Indigenous Peoples account for less than 5 per cent of the global population but they comprise about 15 per cent of the world's poor. Indigenous Peoples represent more than 5000 languages and cultures and yet they are still struggling to find their voices and have their rights recognized.

Other matters on the agenda for this 10 day session include human rights, implementation of the mandates recommended by this session, the ongoing priorities of indigenous children and youth, the Second International Decade for the World's Indigenous People (2004-2014) and urban indigenous people and migration.

-Pradeep Thapa Magar at the UN Headquarters, New York, USA



Participants at the seventh session.



L to R: Francoris' (Deepwater) Lherisson (Muskogee Nation, Wolf Clan), Advisor, United tribal Nations; Faye Feller, Co-Chair, Congo Education Committee, UN; Alan (Spottedwolf) Champney (Aninnan Penicook Nation, Bear Clan), Advisor, United tribal Nations.



Major Victoria Edmonds, Representative to the UN, International Social Justice Commission, The Salvation Army.



Vinie Burrows, UN Representative for Women International Democratic Federation.



Film Maker Rebecca Sommer, Society for Threatened Peoples & Pierrette Birraux, Scientific Director, Indigenous Peoples Center for Documentation, Research and Information.



Francoris' (Deepwater) Lherisson (Muskogee Nation, Wolf Clan), Advisor, United tribal Nations; Dr. Noly Fernandez, Directora Nacional de Salud Indigena, Venezuela; Alan (Spottedwolf) Champney (Aninnan Penicook Nation, Bear Clan), Advisor, United tribal Nations.



Ting-Hui Jocelyn Hung Chien, National Chengchi University, Taiwan Indigenous TV; Yun Hsuan Julia Chiang, Tamkang University, Pi-i Debby Lin, National Taiwan University, Lily Wen, Rukai Community Board of Directors.



Indigenous woman from African nation at the seventh session. Photos: eEyecam

Read more at:



तपाईंको भनाइ लेखी छाड्न र अरुको भनाइ पढ्न यहाँ क्लिक गर्नुहोस्
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