

**The United Nations Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (SPFII) & the
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission**

Present a Workshop on

**Engaging the Marginalized: Partnerships between Indigenous Peoples,
Governments, and Civil Society**

AIDE MEMOIRE

1. Rationale:

The importance of engaging indigenous communities in policy making, design, implementation and evaluation of programs is essential since many public policies do not address the distinct problems, needs and aspirations of these communities. Existing service delivery models also operate in ways that reinforce dependency on government services and do not promote sustainable human development. Furthermore, mechanisms of policy making and programming, even when committed towards partnerships with indigenous peoples often do not fully recognize the collective aspect of human rights or the distinct economic, social and cultural attributes of these communities. Without meaningful engagement of indigenous communities and organizations, governments will not be able to adequately address human development, discrimination, social justice, and governance issues, including those pertaining to the Millennium Development Goals.

In recent years there has been an emergence of international legal and policy frameworks that advocate for substantive and meaningful participation of indigenous communities. The international legal frameworks include the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 and the emerging standards of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These and other instruments make explicit the principle of free, prior, and informed consent of indigenous peoples in relation to projects that affect their land, culture and other aspects of their lives. In addition, there are a number of evolving institutional policy frameworks such as recommendations of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the CCA/UNDAF process and UNDP's policy on engagement of indigenous peoples that recognize the necessity of indigenous participation and engagement in public policy and administration.

Within the context of these legal and policy frameworks the Workshop would seek to engage policy makers, indigenous communities, as well as civil society on meaningful and substantive engagement of indigenous peoples.

2. Goals and Objectives:

The Workshop will discuss the developments at the international level on engagement of indigenous peoples in governance and development activities, and identify best practices at the national and local level of such engagement. The main goal of the Workshop is to raise the awareness of policy makers about the human rights and needs of indigenous communities and the international frameworks that provide the justification for engaging indigenous communities. The Workshop also aims to engage policy makers through discussions and examples of effective national and local government-community partnerships.

Keeping these goals in mind the Workshop seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Enable policy makers to assess and identify challenges to engaging indigenous communities in governance;
2. Identify successful examples of government-indigenous community partnerships; and
3. Develop a check-list of indigenous and international perspectives that would be directly relevant to their work and therefore be practical and useful.

3. Speakers and Workshop Format:

The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (SPFII) proposes a keynote speaker for one of the conference plenary sessions. SPFII suggests Dr. Michael Dodson, a distinguished leader of the Australian Aboriginal community and newly elected member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The proposed panelists for the Workshop will include representatives from indigenous organizations, UNDP and other civil society organizations.

The workshop will be conducted over two sessions of the Conference. At the first breakout session, SPFII would provide the introduction for the theme of the Workshop and briefly discuss the international legal and policy frameworks outlined in the background paper. Each of the Panelists would speak for a period of ten minutes to identify challenges, best practices and examples of engaged governance *viz.* indigenous communities. This would then be followed by a question and answer (Q&A) portion.

At the second session, workshop participants would be invited to convene at their tables and identify common challenges/best practices within their work, and each table would reconvene to present these as questions/comments to the panel. Participants would also be encouraged to develop a checklist of indigenous perspectives that they could return with and apply to their work.

The workshop will also distribute relevant background papers prior to the two sessions.

4. Participants:

An audience of 100 policy makers, representatives of indigenous organizations, and broader civil society are expected to attend the workshop.