



Media Statement

“No room for complacency, indigenous peoples continue to suffer,” says UN human rights chief

- *The following statement has been issued by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, to mark the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples*

9 August 2010, GENEVA – “We have cause to celebrate the progress made in turning human rights into a reality for indigenous peoples, but this International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples is also an occasion to recall that there is no room for complacency. The continuing violations of the rights of indigenous peoples, in all regions of the world, deserve our utmost attention and action.

The gap between the principles of UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the reality remains wide, as indigenous peoples continue to suffer discrimination, marginalisation in such fields as health and education, extreme poverty, disregard for their environmental concerns, displacement from their traditional lands and exclusion from effective participation in decision-making processes. It is particularly disconcerting that those who work to correct these wrongs are, all too often, persecuted for their human rights advocacy.

In a number of countries, new tools have been created to give voice to indigenous peoples in decision-making and to stamp out human rights violations. We are also encouraged by the fact that support for the Declaration keeps expanding, including in the countries that originally voted against this remarkable document.

However, we should redouble our efforts to build a true ‘Partnership in action and dignity’ – the theme given by the General Assembly to the Second International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People – as we work together towards full application of the rights affirmed in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for the survival, dignity and well-being of indigenous peoples of the world.

We need to bring the rights and dignity of those who are suffering most to the centre of our efforts. This requires changes in practices, but we also need improved laws and institutions, without which advances are not sustainable.

On this International Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to translate the words of the Declaration into effective action. Keeping this promise is our obligation.”

(*) Check the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/512/07/PDF/N0651207.pdf?OpenElement>

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Learn more about the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay:
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