

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Indigenous Peoples Partnership



International
Labour
Organization



*For Immediate Release
20 July 2011*

UN sets new focus on key issues and regions to promote Indigenous Rights

(GENEVA) – The first meeting of the Policy Board of the newly established United Nations Indigenous Peoples Partnership (UNIPP), opened by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Deputy Director-General Guy Ryder, reached wide agreement on key regions of operation and an initial focus on crucial issues, including the increase in access to justice especially with regard to the impact of extractive industries on indigenous communities.

The Partnership (UNIPP) brings together the ILO, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Development Programme, UNICEF and the UN Population Fund and aims to advance in a coordinated way the rights that have been internationally agreed to and are further supported by the ILO's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 (1989) and other relevant international instruments. UNIPP is also equipped with a multi-donor trust fund, to which a number of donors have already contributed.

In its deliberations, the Policy Board appointed the ILO as the hosting organization of the technical Secretariat and adopted governance and operational documents, along with strategic priorities to move the joint rights-based initiative to the next level of implementation through the multi-donor trust fund. The trust fund was established to assist in the mobilization and management of resources for a wide set of activities and joint programmes to help realise indigenous peoples' rights.

The Board decided to focus, over the next few years, on the key regions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It has also identified thematic priorities that should be addressed during this start-up period, namely, access to justice and strengthening of indigenous customary law, access to land and ancestral territories, the impact of extractive industries on indigenous peoples and the role of indigenous women.

In reflecting upon the importance of the UNIPP, Policy Board member Raja Devasish Roy stated “the Partnership is unique because it will create a greater sense of urgency and reinvigorate international action to make indigenous peoples rights a priority in the national context, especially through laws and public policies.”

For further information, please contact: Dr Albert Barume, ILO Senior Specialist on Indigenous & Tribal Peoples' Issues, at barume@ilo.org or by telephone at: +41-22-799-6859.