

# UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTARY FUND FOR INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

## I. MANDATE

The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/131 of 13 December 1985, with the purpose of assisting representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to participate in the deliberations of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights by providing them with financial assistance, funded by means of voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/156 of 21 December 1995, decided that the Fund should also be used to assist representatives of indigenous communities and organizations authorized to participate in the deliberations of the open-ended inter-sessional Working Group of the Commission of Human Rights on the Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples established by the Commission in its resolution 1995/32, as endorsed by the Economic and Social Council on 25 of July 1995.

The General Assembly in its resolution 56/140 of 19 December 2001 again extended the mandate of the Fund by deciding that the Fund should also be used to assist representatives of indigenous communities and organizations in attending the sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. In accordance with ECOSOC resolution 2000/22, which established the Permanent Forum as a subsidiary organ of the Council, its mandate is to discuss indigenous issues within the mandate of the Council relating to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.

The Fund is administered by the Secretary-General in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations with the advice of a Board of Trustees composed of five persons with relevant experience on indigenous issues who serve in their personal capacity. The members of the Board are appointed by the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, for a three-year renewable term. At least one member of the Board of Trustees shall be a representative of a widely recognized organization of indigenous people.

The members of the Board of Trustees who have been appointed by the Secretary-General, are themselves indigenous persons: Ms. Tarcila Rivera Zea (Quechua, Peru), Mr. Lars Anders Baer (Sami, Sweden), Mr. Nadir Bekirov (Crimean Tatar, Ukraine, Chairperson), Mr. Ahmed Mahiou (Amazigh, Algeria), Ms. Jannie Lasimbang (Kadazan, Malaysia).

## II. BENEFICIARIES

According to the criteria established by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/131, the beneficiaries of assistance from the Fund shall be representatives of indigenous people's organizations and communities: (i) who are so considered by the Board of Trustees; (ii) who would not, in the opinion of Board, be able to attend the sessions of the working groups or the Permanent Forum without the assistance provided by the Fund; (iii) who would be able to contribute to a deeper knowledge of the part of the working groups or the Permanent Forum of the problems affecting indigenous populations and who would provide a broad geographical representation. In addition, the Board has developed other practices and guidelines which are reflected in the application form.

## III. THE GRANTS APPROVAL CYCLE

Applications for grants for the 2007 sessions have to be submitted **by 1 October 2006** for analysis by the secretariat of the Fund. Admissible applications are examined by the Board of Trustees at its annual session in February/March. The Board adopts recommendations for approval by the High Commissioner for Human Rights on behalf of the Secretary-General. Beneficiaries are then informed of the decisions in March/April.

#### **IV. GRANTS RECOMMENDED IN 2006**

At its 19<sup>th</sup> session, in February 2006, the Board considered 203 admissible applications from indigenous representatives to attend the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (New York, May 2006), 177 applications for travel grants for indigenous representatives to attend the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the Sub-Commission's Working Group on Indigenous Populations (Geneva, July 2006) and 15 applications for travel grants to attend the next session of the Working Group established by the Commission of Human Rights on the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, in the case the mandate of the Working Group should be extended.

After having examined the applications in the light of established criteria, the Board recommended 46 travel grants allowing representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to attend the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; 45 travel grants to attend the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and 10 travel grants for indigenous representatives to attend the Working Group on the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples.

#### **V. REPORTS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FUND**

Relevant information on the activities of the Fund and Board can be found in the report by the Secretary-General on the Status of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations (A/59/257); in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Programme of Activities for the Decade, (A/59/277); in the Final Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights reviewing the activities within the United Nations system under the programme for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, E/CN.4/2005/87 as well as in the Note by the Secretariat to the Sub-Commissions Working Group on the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/2005/5.

#### **VI. CONTACTS**

For any additional information, please contact the Fund's and Board's secretariat:

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