

Indigenous Peoples Caucus

Meeting with Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, Senior Vice-President of ECOSOC,
to discuss the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

World Council of Churches, Geneva
July 22, 2001, 11 a.m.

Questions:

1. We all agree that the Permanent Forum needs a separate secretariat to be successful in its work and to bring the Permanent Forum to the same level as other UN Agencies. We're looking for parity. One way to attain parity is through financial support of the Permanent Forum. Are you aware of discussions regarding financial allocations for the Permanent Forum? And also, Mr. Ambassador, the Indigenous Caucus respectfully requests a comprehensive explanation of the resolution introduced by Denmark to ECOSOC.

2. As you will remember, when we met on May 18 in New York City a question was raised concerning the participation of Indigenous Nations as nations, rather than having to use the credentials of NGOs. We would appreciate it, for clarification purposes, for those Indigenous Peoples and Nations who were unable to send representatives to that meeting, if you could reiterate what you shared with us at that meeting and do you have anything new to share with us today.

3. We need clarity on the process for the selection of the 8 Indigenous representatives (and we understand that the representatives are independent experts); would you be receptive to the Caucus recommending an Indigenous delegate assisting the President of ECOSOC in his deliberations? We have had many formal deliberations and developed our own processes for the selection of the Indigenous delegates and we believe we have much to contribute.

4. Will the Indigenous Caucus have the opportunity to express our preference on where the Permanent Forum will meet and help make suggestions regarding the agenda?

5. Some governments, and in particular the United States, have stated that the Working Group on Indigenous Populations has fulfilled its mandate. The Working Group needs to continue its work, because it has not finished its work; some of us have discussed the new life and energy the Permanent Forum will bring to the Working Group. However, we cannot stress enough that the Working Group on Indigenous Populations has elements that a Permanent Forum does not have. Additionally, the City of Geneva and the Country of Switzerland have been very welcoming to Indigenous Peoples, and we are most appreciative. Can you please comment on the continuance of the Working Group?