

**United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
(UNPFII)**

Topic A

Recognizing treaty rights

Topic B

Preservation of indigenous language

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Letter from the Dais

Dear delegates,

This year's topics are designed to let every delegation have a chance to participate and engage in providing possible solutions to major indigenous issues. This academically distinguished conference aims at removing prejudices and unjust biases implemented in today's community while allowing students to develop an awareness of the disregarded issues that prevent the world from improving as a whole.

Throughout the debates, delegates will gain an understanding of their countries' positions in the global context as they will represent a range of opinions to ultimately reach a compromise with other nations. Delegates will grasp on a new perspective of understanding their topics from the places and significant individuals that they will visit days before the conference. We expect delegates to be the voice of nations which do not always have a chance to speak out to the world. Ultimately, delegates will be recognized for their role and effort in bringing unity within their speaking and resolutions.

As avid debaters and students who seek to find opportunities to gain knowledge from different points of view, we are thrilled to have the chance to lead a two-day debate where we will not only be guiding students but will also be learning from the variety of backgrounds that students come from. The dais is working hard to make this event an academically successful experience from which all students will bring back a better interpretation of international relations as well as ways to approach global issues. As dais, we are preparing every step needed for an effective execution which also means making sure that delegates are all but stressed.

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Barbara Ostyk

Committee description

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recognizes the indigenous tribes alive today and the challenges they are facing. With six mandated areas (economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights), this committee promotes showing empathy for today's indigenous communities rather than showing sympathy for the history of oppression against the community. Just as any other UN organization, the UNPFII was created to deal with specific matter that affects only a certain society, in this case the indigenous society. All of humanity cannot be treated with the same approach which is why each committee aims at proposing resolutions to critical issues.

This committee consists of countries in the Americas, Europe, Australia, and Africa which either have a significant past or continue representing indigenous rights at the forefront of the topic, such as the Lakota tribe in the United States and the Huaroni people of Ecuador. Therefore your delegations are inherently in favor of indigenous rights and are seeking to find solutions to issues internal and external to indigenous matters.

Delegates will be debating both the stance that indigenous peoples have in today's world and how their languages are preserved based on the context of the delegates' respective countries. For the first topic, it is crucial that delegates come prepared and are up-to-date regarding all laws, rules and actions that impact native people. Speakers must also be aware of the rights of indigenous people and their agreements with authorities that have been created a long time ago yet may be violated to this day. The second topic regarding native languages is one that should be centred around the idea of providing ways to save national dialects as a significant part of culture. Delegates should have a developed understanding of what has been causing languages to disappear and what has not yet been created to prevent this from going on.

Timeline of UNPFII

1923-25: First International Involvement

1981: Martínez Cobo Study

1982: Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP)

1989: International Labour Organization (ILO), Convention 169

1993: International Year of the World's Indigenous People

1994: International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples

2000: Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

2001: Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

2005: Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples

2007: Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP)

2007: UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

2014: World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP)

How to submit Position Papers

- **Title** (Committee, Country_Delegate Name)
- **Format:** Save as pdf

Outline for Position Papers

Heading

- Delegate Name
- Delegation
- Committee
- Topic Title

Opening

- Must include brief introduction of topic and its significance.

Positioning

- Clear description of country's stance towards the conflict.

Possible Solutions

- Past actions to resolving the conflict.
- Involvement with the UN.

Closing

- Restate significance and ideas presented.

References

- Include all citations used in research for this paper.

Participation List

1. Australia
2. Botswana
3. Burundi
4. Cameroon
5. Canada
6. China
7. Colombia
8. Ecuador
9. Finland
10. India
11. Kenya
12. Mexico
13. Morocco
14. Namibia
15. Nepal
16. Peru
17. South Africa
18. Tanzania
19. Uganda
20. United States

Mission Statement

“Restore peace and stability between indigenous groups and those involved in the issue by all delegations and address the severity of indigenous problems to all delegations.”

TOPIC A: Recognizing treaty rights

Overview of Topic

Treaty rights are agreements signed between indigenous tribes and “modern” or settler societies in the past. However, what is often set aside is that some agreements are still significant today. Treaty rights were created to make a compromise regarding land and general rights between indigenous communities and federal governments of European colonization. Nevertheless, many state governments, which encompass more authority and power, are neglecting these treaties for their own advantage and mistreating the more inferior native tribes. As the negligence of treaty rights is becoming more common worldwide, many indigenous people’s rights are being overlooked by many, creating negative consequences to them.

Definitions

Treaty Rights: The specific agreements between native communities and the government giving a compromise as to what resources the indigneous communities have access to and what rights they reserve.

Settler Societies: “Settler societies are a particular type of colonial society, in which settlers set out to take over the lands of indigenous peoples” (The University of Auckland)

Expectations for Countries in Committee

All delegates must clearly comprehend what are treaty rights and search for violation of treaty rights in their own nations in order to continue the forum. Having a thorough understanding of the relationship between native tribes and settlers may facilitate the delegates to grasp the situation more readily and evoke more solutions addressing the issue.

Major Parties Involved

United States of America

- Indigenous communities in the Lakota region.
- Alaska Natives communities
- Federal government ended treaty-making with Native nations in 1871

Canada

- The First Nations, Inuits
- Justin Trudeau invested CAD\$4.6 billion for improvement of indigenous infrastructure.

Previous Resolutions

- General Assembly
 - December 21st 1993: Proclaimed the **International Decade of the World's indigenous People** (1995-2004) to raise awareness of indigenous issues
 - December 23rd 1994: Passed the resolution for the **International Day of the World's Indigenous People** which is celebrated every year on August 9th.
 - December 20th 2004: Proclaimed the **Second International Decade of the World's indigenous People** (2005-2015) to further strengthen international cooperation for solutions of indigenous issues.

TOPIC B: Preservation of indigenous language

Overview of Topic

From the millions of native languages, only a small number survives and is passed down to the next generation. One issue contributing to the extinction of languages is that some are only spoken and do not have an alphabet to inscribe a language that can be easily taught and saved over the years. Another factor is that some words are culture-specific, meaning that they do not have a translation to the globalized languages where more is preserved. When a language disappears, so does its cultural and intellectual heritage. Out of all cultural reasons, the most influential and poignant conflict which contributes to the drastic decrease in language preservation is that of the presiding westernized powers. As indigenous communities face daily struggles against the developed and globalized corporations, less and less opportunities are given to facilitate the expansion of indigenous awareness.

Major Parties Involved

United States of America

Home to many indigenous reservations including the Pine Ridge as well as present communities such as the Lakota, Navajo, and Apache.

Australia

290–363 indigneous languages

Mexico

Nahuatl among 68 indigenous languages

Canada

Approximately 90 languages (UNESCO)

South Africa

More than 35 indigneous languages

Previous Resolutions

All General Assembly resolutions regarding indigneous rights:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/general-assembly-resolutions-on-indigenous-peoples.html>

UN Involvement

- July 28th 2000:

Invented UNPFII (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues)

- September 13th 2007:

Established the ***United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)*** which guarantees certain collective rights of Indigenous people such as ownership rights of culture and language.

Research Expectations

In order to find a common ground that allows for a resolution to positively apply to each nation, it is important that delegates find information relating to the specific native tribes of their countries. Additionally, all speakers should have some resolutions to present from the past and should provide an explanation as to why those resolutions are most effective.

Research resources

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2019/01/2019-international-year-of-indigenous-languages/>

<https://artsfaculty.auckland.ac.nz/courses/?Subject=SOCIOL&Number=746&Year=2019>

<https://www.cigionline.org/articles/limits-meaningful-aboriginal-and-treaty-rights>

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/about-us.html>

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/general-assembly-resolutions-on-indigenous-peoples.html>