
Worldwide knowledge and understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures, past and present

9 August 2004 - INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Mick Dodson appointed to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The Chairperson of AIATSIS, Professor Mick Dodson AM, will represent Indigenous people of the Pacific region on the United Nations (UN) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, AIATSIS Principal Steve Larkin said today.

Professor Dodson's three-year appointment to the influential body was made by the UN Economic and Social Council and will formally commence next year.

The Permanent Forum was established by the Council in July 2000, on the recommendation of the Commission on Human Rights. It reports and makes recommendations to the Council on economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.

Mr Larkin said that for 30 years Professor Dodson had been a vigorous advocate on land rights, human rights and other issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as the interests of other Indigenous peoples throughout the world.

"Professor Dodson was Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, as well as Counsel assisting the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. He chairs a number of domestic Indigenous bodies including AIATSIS," Mr Larkin said.

"For more than a decade, Professor Dodson has participated in the crafting of the text of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations. He was the Co-Deputy Chair of the Technical Committee for the 1993 International Year of the World's Indigenous People, serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Indigenous Voluntary Fund, and was Chairman of the United Nations Advisory Group for the Voluntary Fund for the Decade of Indigenous Peoples.

"These positions and, of course, his life experience as a *Yawuru* Aboriginal man eminently qualify Professor Dodson to represent the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific region."

The Permanent Forum also raises awareness, promotes the integration and coordination of activities relating to Indigenous issues within the UN system, and prepares and disseminates information on Indigenous issues.

Members of the Permanent Forum operate in their own capacities as independent experts. Eight Indigenous members are appointed following consultation with regional groups and Indigenous organisations, and eight members are nominated by governments and elected by the Council. *A list of current members is attached.*

The Permanent Forum meets once a year for ten working days and submits an annual report to the Council. The next session of the Permanent Forum will be in New York in May 2005.

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is held on 9 August annually in recognition of the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva.

Further information: Kirstie Parker @ AIATSIS on (02) 6261 4225 or (0412) 646 926

**UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES
MEMBERS 2005 – 2007**

Nominated by Indigenous Organisations

1. Mr Pavel SULTYANDZIGA (Former USSR)
2. Ms Nina Pacari VEGA (Latin America and the Caribbean)
3. Ms Victoria TAULI-CORPUZ (Asia)
4. Mr Parshuram TAMANG (Asia)
5. Mr Michael DODSON (Pacific)
6. Mr Wilton LITTLECHILD (North America)
7. Mr Aqqaluk LYNGE (Europe and Arctic)
8. Mr Hassan Id BALKASSM (Africa)

Nominated by Governments

1. Mr Eduardo AGUIAR DE ALMEIDA (Government of Brazil)
2. Ms Njuma EKUNDANAYO (Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo)
3. Ms Ida NICOLAISEN (Government of Denmark)
4. Ms Otilia LUX GARCIA DE COTI (Government of Guatemala)
5. Ms Xiaomei QIN (Government of China)
6. Mr Yuri BOYCHENKO (Government of the Russian Federation)
7. Mr William Ralph JOEY LANGEVELDT (Government of South Africa)