

# PROJECT ACCESS

GLOBAL CAPACITY BUILDING  
FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES



**PROJECT ACCESS, a cooperative effort of Tribal Link Foundation and Land is Life, supports indigenous peoples' participation in international meetings and conferences where decisions are being made that affect their rights, cultures and livelihoods. Initially, the project is placing a special emphasis on funding indigenous peoples to attend the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, May 10–21, 2004.**

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PROJECT ACCESS is a collaboration between Tribal Link Foundation and Land is Life

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FALL 2004

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## SUMMARY

PROJECT ACCESS was able to provide 15 indigenous peoples' representatives to attend two full weeks of the 3rd session of the Permanent Forum. Also, in order for the representatives to be able to participate more effectively at the Forum, we organized two capacity building workshops before and during the session.

Each of the representatives sponsored by Project Access was also provided individual support by the project coordinators, steering committee members and instructors. We organized press conferences and media interviews, arranged meetings with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN bodies, and also assisted in writing interventions, and lobbying.

Trainings were led by some of the world's most experienced indigenous rights experts, and were geared towards giving participants practical knowledge and skills that could be put to use immediately to forward their peoples' struggles. Special emphasis was given to understanding and participating effectively in the Permanent Forum.

Participants and trainers unanimously agreed that the trainings were effective and they were eager to work with Project Access to organize regional trainings and expand upon the Permanent Forum trainings.

## BACKGROUND

At the first session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in May of 2002, Land is Life and Tribal Link brought together a group of indigenous leaders to discuss the urgent need to strengthen the ability of indigenous peoples to participate effectively in international meetings, conferences and policy-making processes that affect their rights, cultures, health, lands and/or sovereignty. A Steering Committee, made up of indigenous community representatives from around the world was formed, and Project Access was created. The Steering Committee guides the work of the project and consults with indigenous communities and organizations from different regions of the world to ensure that there is broad based participation in the project's activities, and that the project most effectively addresses the needs of indigenous communities.



Opening session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, May 10, 2004.

## PROJECT ACCESS FUNDING RECIPIENTS

### AFRICA

Sinafasi Makelo (Mbuti), DRC  
 Pacifique Mukumba (Mbuti), DRC  
 Mary Simat (Maasai), Kenya

### ASIA

Umakanta Meitei (Meitei), India  
 Anna Pinto, India

### CENTRAL AMERICA

Marcelino Diaz de Jesus (Nahua), Mexico  
 Josefino Martinez (Triqui), Mexico  
 Onel Masardule (Kuna), Panama

### THE PACIFIC

Yoab Syatfle, West Papua

### SOUTH AMERICA

Justa Cabrera (Guarani), Bolivia  
 Moi Enomenga (Huaorani), Ecuador  
 Marcos Terena (Terena), Brazil  
 Bartolo Ushigua (Zapara), Ecuador  
 Gloria Ushigua (Zapara), Ecuador

### NORTH AMERICA

Elaine Alexie (Tetl'it Gwich'in), Canada



**When I spoke at the first, historic session of the Permanent Forum two years ago, my message to you was simple: you have a home here. The UN system of agencies, funds and programmes is uniquely placed to help indigenous people overcome a history of discrimination and inequality. I repeat that message today.**

– KOFI ANNAN,  
 UN SECRETARY GENERAL

## PROJECT ACCESS · CAPACITY BUILDING

### 1<sup>ST</sup> TRAINING

#### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THEIR ROLE IN THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ARENA

The first training was held May 6 –7, 2004, two days prior to the meeting of the Permanent Forum.

Classes were given on the following themes:

- † The UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations
- † The UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- † Indigenous Rights and International Labour Organization convention 169
- † Protection of Indigenous Knowledge
- † The Conventions on Biological Diversity and Climate Change
- † The UN System and Indigenous Peoples
- † World Bank and Indigenous Peoples
- † The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Special emphasis was placed on preparing for effective participation in the upcoming meeting of the Permanent Forum, with practice in elaborating interventions and recommendations before the Forum, lobbying Forum members, and taking advantage of their time at the UN by meeting with government representatives, UN programmes, funds and agencies, foundations and media. This training was done in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

### 2<sup>ND</sup> TRAINING

#### FILING HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLAINTS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Our 2nd training was held on Saturday May 15, halfway through the two weeks of the Permanent Forum.

This training was attended by 25 indigenous peoples' representatives. The instructors for this training were Tomas Alarcon, Joshua Cooper, and Ms. Eleanor Solo, a UN expert on Human Rights Complaints.

Participants learned:

- † History and structure of the UN Human Rights system.
- † Filing complaints using Procedure 1503
- † Human Rights Conventions and Committees
- † How to Monitor Compliance with Conventions
- † Working to Ensure Compliance with Conventions

## PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

### 3RD SESSION · MAY 10-21, 2004

Over 1,500 people attended the 3rd session of the Permanent Forum. This year the Forum's special theme was "Indigenous Women." Based on the recommendation of participants, the Forum produced twelve pages of recommendations for policy action on a broad range of issues related to the advancement of the rights of indigenous women.

The well-being of indigenous women is considered critical to the survival and prosperity of indigenous peoples and their unique cultures; indigenous women are the keepers of gender-specific traditional knowledge that is transmitted from one generation to the next.

The follow up report to the third session of the PFII seeks to address a lack of participation by indigenous women, stating, "Violent conflicts and militarization fundamentally affect the lives of indigenous women and their families and communities, causing violations of their human rights and displacement from their ancestral lands. Yet indigenous women do not see themselves as passive victims but have taken up the roles of mediators and peace builders. Recognizing the profound concerns of the impact of conflict situations on indigenous women, the Forum ensures that the concerns and priorities of indigenous women are properly taken into account by taking concrete steps to increase the participation of indigenous women in governance and decision-making structures at all levels."



The Forum made other important decisions in their 68 page report, including extending the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples for another three years, holding a workshop on free, prior and informed consent, and a recommendation that the UN declare a 2nd Decade of Indigenous Peoples for 2005 – 2015.

At this year's Forum there were also high level dialogues between indigenous peoples, the World Bank, and other international institutions. Additionally, dialogues were held with UN programmes and agencies whose work affects indigenous peoples. These include the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Human Settlement Programme, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

## BACKGROUND

### THE UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

*The UN, governments, international organizations, civil society groups, private businesses and, above all, indigenous peoples themselves, can form partnerships to promote development, human rights and peace. These partnerships will only work, however, if there is genuine participation of indigenous peoples in the decisions that affect them – and if there is genuine sensitivity towards their cultures.”*

– Kofi Annan, UN SECRETARY GENERAL

Indigenous peoples began asking the United Nations to set up a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in the late 1980's. For indigenous peoples, participation in the United Nations was very limited, and the UN system was not addressing their real life needs and concerns. They proposed the establishment of a new body that would offer all indigenous peoples of the world a space to participate in the UN system and would focus on the global issues that are of concern to their communities.

In April 2000, the Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution to establish the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and three months later the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) endorsed the resolution, and created the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as a high level advisory body to ECOSOC. The first meeting of the Forum was held in 2002.

The Forum is composed of sixteen members, eight of whom are nominated by indigenous peoples and eight nominated by governments. Governments may nominate indigenous experts if they choose, and some have done so.

Their mandate is to:

- † Provide expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the Council, as well as to programmes, funds and agencies of the United Nations through the Council
- † Raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system
- † Prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues

The Forum holds public sessions for two weeks every year, where the Forum members receive the testimony, requests and recommendations of indigenous peoples. The work of the Permanent Forum is divided into the following themes:

- Economic and Social Development
- Culture
- The Environment
- Education
- Health
- Human Rights

This new UN body creates a unique opportunity for indigenous peoples to monitor and influence the work of the UN, and creates a space, for two weeks every year, where indigenous peoples can voice their concerns about issues that are not being addressed by States or the international community. Members of the Forum, as well as the Secretariat, work throughout the year to ensure that the recommendations of the Forum are enacted and to expand upon important dialogues that were initiated during the Forum.

The establishment of the Permanent Forum represents an historic gain for indigenous peoples around the world, and they are working hard to ensure that its work is relevant, productive and contributes to making real and positive change.

## EVALUATION

On the last day of the Permanent Forum, Project Access held a meeting to critically evaluate our work at the Forum and the two capacity building workshops that we held before and during the Forum. It was unanimous among participants, instructors, steering committee members and coordinators that the trainings as well as participation at the Permanent Forum were great successes. The results could be seen at the Permanent Forum, when participants gave well elaborated interventions and made clear, concise recommendations that reflected the needs of their respective peoples. Many of their recommendations were included in the final report submitted by the Permanent Forum to ECOSOC.

## FUTURE PLANS FOR PROJECT ACCESS

In 2005 Project Access aims to hold a series of regional capacity building workshops which focus on the specific issues affecting each region. We are also planning to expand on our Permanent Forum trainings by holding a four day training prior to the 4th session of the Forum. In addition we have received many requests for workshops on specific issues; for example, we are currently working with the Guarani leaders in Bolivia, Argentina and Brazil to organize a workshop that focuses specifically on the situation of the Guarani. They are uniting to defend their territories and culture against oil and timber companies, ranchers and government agencies that are intent on displacing them in order to exploit their lands.



## PROJECT ACCESS · STEERING COMMITTEE



VIKTOR KAISIEPO is Biak from West Papua. He lives in exile in The Netherlands. Viktor is a founding member of the Papua Presidium Council, which represents over 1 million indigenous West Papuans in their non-violent struggle for self-determination. Viktor has been representing the indigenous peoples of West Papua at the United Nations for over twenty years. He is also Chairperson of the World Bank's Fund for Indigenous Peoples.



MIRIAN MASAQUIZA is a Kichwa from the community of Salasaca in Ecuador. As a teenager, Mirian became a leader of the indigenous youth movement in Ecuador. She received a fellowship to work at the peaceful protests. She presently works for the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.



ONEL MASARDULE is a representative of the Kuna people of Panama. He is Coordinator of the Foundation for the Promotion of Indigenous Knowledge, and also is Director of the Institute for the Holistic Development of Kuna Yala, and a representative of the Coalition of Indigenous Peoples of Meso-America.



ANNA PINTO represents the Center for Organization and Research on the Environment. Her work's focus is the rights of indigenous children and women. Anna has brought the issues that concern indigenous children before the United Nations General Assembly, and is working to ensure that the UN Children's Fund understands the situation of indigenous children around the world, and to ensure that their work effectively addresses children's issues.



MARCOS TERENA is of the Terena people from the Pantanal region in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. He founded the first indigenous peoples rights movement in Brazil, the Union of Indigenous Nations, in 1977. In 1992 he organized the historic World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territories, Environment and Development. Marcos is a founding member of the Inter-Tribal Committee, Land is Life, the International Alliance of Indigenous-Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests and the Brazilian Indigenous Institute on Intellectual Property.

## PROJECT ACCESS • INSTRUCTORS



TOMAS ALARCON is Aymara from the Andes in Peru. He is a lawyer, and the Director of CAPAJ, an organization that works for the rights of the Aymara people in Peru and Bolivia. Tomas has been participating in United Nations conferences and meetings for over twenty years. He has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and is Chair of the meetings of the UN Experts on the Administration of Justice and Indigenous Peoples. Tomas teaches indigenous peoples rights at the International Training Center for Indigenous Peoples in Nuuk, Greenland.



JOSHUA COOPER is a professor of Human Rights Education at the University of Hawaii and the Director of the Hawaii Institute for Human Rights. Joshua teaches Human Rights Workshops around the world and works closely with many indigenous peoples organizations. He is the Chair of Amnesty International's Working Group on Indigenous Peoples.



DR. ROY LAIFUNGBAM is Meitei from the Province of Manipur in North-East India. He is Director of the Center on Research and the Environment, and a member of the international Indigenous Committee on Health. Roy's work has been instrumental in building effective alliances amongst indigenous peoples throughout Asia.

## PROJECT ACCESS • COORDINATORS

Tribal Link Foundation and Land is Life have been working together on developing this project since 2002. Since beginning, we have assisted indigenous peoples' representatives to participate at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (and its preparatory meetings), United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Conference of the Parties to the RAMSAR Wetlands Convention, meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other important international fora.



**BRIAN KEANE, Coordinator**

LAND IS LIFE is a coalition of indigenous communities and their representative organizations from around the world that was founded at the historic World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territories, Environment and Development (1992). Land is Life works for the recognition of indigenous peoples' human, economic, social, cultural and territorial rights.



**PAMELA KRAFT, Director**

TRIBAL LINK FOUNDATION, INC. is a communications network linking indigenous peoples to information, media, resources and relevant networks, with a special focus on the United Nations system. Tribal Link provides outreach to the public regarding indigenous peoples and their issues, emphasizing the significance of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

## PROJECT ACCESS · PARTICIPANTS

### AFRICA



SINAFASI MAKELO, and PACIFIQUE MUKUMBA are of the Mbuti people that live in the forests of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Mbuti are commonly referred to as Pygmies, and they have suffered a long history of human rights abuses. Fighting in the DRC over control of resources has had a devastating effect on the Mbuti. Sinafasi and Pacifique along with a coalition of communities, are leading the struggle to get the Mbuti a space in the peace process, and to get Mbuti rights recognized and Mbuti lands demarcated as part of the new DRC.



MARY SIMAT is Maasai from the Narok District in Kenya. Mary is the Chairwoman of Maasai Women for Education and Economic Development, which works for the rights of Maasai women and girls. Mary is also a member of the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC), a cooperative network of indigenous peoples from the entire continent.

### ASIA



UMAKANTA MEITEI is General Secretary of the Threatened Indigenous Peoples Society, an indigenous organization in Manipur, India that documents human rights abuses, works to bring the perpetrators to justice and carries out human rights awareness campaigns throughout Manipur. Umakanta is also the spokesperson of Apunba Lup, a coalition of 34 human rights organizations.

### THE PACIFIC



YOAB SYATFLE is from Sarong, West Papua. He is a member of the Papua Traditional Council, which represents over 1 million indigenous West Papuans in their non-violent struggle to protect their rights and practice self-determination.

### SOUTH AMERICA



JUSTA CABRERA is a leader of the Guarani people of Bolivia. She is a traditional midwife, and is working on community health, fair trade, environmental protection and recognition of collective rights to land, resources and knowledge.

## PROJECT ACCESS • PARTICIPANTS CONTINUED



MOI ENOMENGA represents the Huaorani people of Ecuador. Moi is a leader in the struggle to protect Huaorani rights in relation to oil development that is taking place on their ancestral homelands. Moi founded the first Huaorani representative organization. He is well known because of Joe Kane's book "Savages".



BARTOLO USHIGUA and GLORIA USHIGUA are leaders of the Zapara people who live in Ecuador and Peru. Until a few years ago, the Zapara were thought to have been extinct. Starting with the rubber boom in the early nineteenth century, the Zapara have experienced a history of slavery, massacres and sickness that has reduced their population from 20,000 to 350 (approximately 200 in Ecuador and 150 in Peru). The Zapara are now fighting to preserve their culture, language and traditional knowledge, and to have their lands legalized and demarcated. Their lands and cultures are currently threatened by oil development.

### CENTRAL AMERICA



MARCELINO DIAZ DE JESUS is a Nahua community leader from the state of Guerrero, Mexico. Marcelino has represented his people at the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and other international fora. Marcelino has also been a leader in Mexico at the national level. He was the first indigenous person elected to the Mexican Congress, and also participated in the National Indigenous Congress. Marcelino was a leader in the successful struggle to stop construction of the San Juan Tetelcingo Dam, which would have destroyed two dozen communities and force the relocation of 40,000 people.



JOSEFINO MARTINEZ is a leader of the Triqui people of the Province of Oaxaca, Mexico. Josefino's work focuses on community health, land rights and education. He represents his people in the National Assembly of Indigenous Peoples. Josefino's work is bringing health care to Triqui communities, which are marginalized and far from urban centers. He has organized a community ambulance that serves Triqui communities that have no access to health care.

### NORTH AMERICA



ELAINE ALEXIE is of the Tetl'it Gwich'in people of the Northwest Territories. Elaine has traveled widely and lobbied in the US to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska from oil development. The refuge, which the Gwich'in call "the place where life begins", is the calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou herd that the Gwich'in are dependent upon for survival. She is a community organizer and educator.

## THANK YOU TO AVEDA CORPORATION

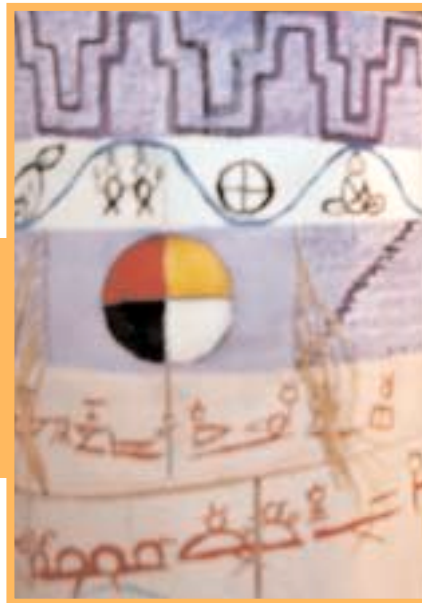
As a result of the generosity of the Aveda Corporation, Tribal Link Foundation and Land as Life were able to launch Project Access in 2004. Project Access is a program which strengthens the participation of indigenous peoples in international policy-making processes where, increasingly, decisions that affect them are being made. The program was able to support the participation of 15 indigenous representatives to attend the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as well as a complementary training program. Many stated that their participation in the Forum was greatly enhanced by the knowledge that they gained in the training and the partnerships that were formed with other indigenous peoples and supporters.

The reception that Aveda held for the indigenous delegates at its New York offices was a true example of partnership, solidarity, hospitality and generosity at its best. This cross cultural exchange left the guests feeling that the people at Aveda really care about the indigenous struggle and that they not only had a new home at the United Nations but also had a wonderful extended family at Aveda!



# INDIGENOUS VOICES

**We have highlighted the stories of a few of the indigenous representatives Project Access funded to attend the Permanent Forum. These individuals have experienced exploitation of their lands, domestic violence, environmental destruction, torture, and more, yet their will and determination to see justice prevail has sustained them. Their stories inspire us to do all that we can to support them at strategic moments in their efforts to preserve their communities and their culture.**



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FROM AFRICA

## BUILDING BRIDGES

SINAFASI MAKELO

PACIFIQUE MUKUMBA

Mbuti

Democratic Republic of Congo

Sinafasi Makelo and Pacifique Mukumba are representatives of the Mbuti people that live in the forests of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Mbuti are commonly referred to as Pygmies, and have endured a long history of suffering. Fighting in the DRC over control of resources has had a devastating affect on them. They have been killed, taken into slavery, and even cannibalized by armed factions who believe that eating the Mbuti will give them supernatural powers.

Sinafasi and Pacifique have been leading the struggle to get the Mbuti a space in the new and tenuous peace process. They believe that if their people are going to survive they must get their rights recognized and their lands demarcated as part of the new DRC. They have formed a coaliton of Mbuti communities and organizations that is working to bring the hopes and concerns of the Mbuti to all those who are playing a role in the development of the new DRC: DRC government officials, United Nations Programmes and Agencies, NGOs, the World Bank and others.

They are also collecting evidence and testimony that is being presented to the International Criminal Court in the Hague, where crimes committed during the DRC conflict will be the first case heard by the Court.

We have been working with these dedicated Mbuti representatives for three years. We have helped them by providing travel expenses for important meetings, arranged press conferences and helped them develop their strategies and proposals. As part of their building bridges this year at the Permanent Forum, they were able to meet with the DRC's Ambassador to the United Nations as well as with other governments, UN agencies, and NGOs.

Attending the Permanent Forum also allowed them to meet with World Bank officials (who are now funding a honey production project for some Mbuti communities) to discuss the need for funding provided by World Bank to the DRC to be used in a way that recognizes and respects their rights, and that funding should also be provided for Mbuti health care, education and land demarcation. They also had important meetings with representatives of the DRC government to discuss the peace process and propose steps that the new DRC government should take towards recognizing their rights.



FROM AFRICA

## INDIGENOUS WOMEN: WISDOM KEEPERS INCLUDED IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

MARY SIMAT

Maasai

Kenya

*"I realize I am not alone."* – Mary Simat

Mary Simat is a dynamic Maasai woman from the Narok District in Kenya. She is the Chairperson of Maasai Women for Education and Economic Development (MAWEED), which works for the rights of Maasai women and girls. Mary is also a member of the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC), a cooperative network of indigenous peoples from the entire continent.

It was particularly important for Mary to attend the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFI) this year, because the special theme was "Indigenous Women". Indigenous women in the developing world face many common threats; poverty, little or no access to health care and education; armed conflicts; loss of their lands; and human trafficking, to name just a few. Everywhere they are paid less, given the lowest jobs, and are often subject to discrimination, humiliation and sexual abuse.

Indigenous women around the world, from both traditional and non-traditional societies, agree that one of their greatest concerns is the negative impact of their exclusion from decision-making processes, whether involving local, governmental, intergovernmental or civil society institutions. Indigenous women have an important contribution to make at all levels of negotiation and planning having to do with families and communities - in peacetime and in times of conflict. Their inclusion usually supports better, more environmentally sustainable outcomes that preserve the health of their communities as well as their cultural identities.

For Mary, participating in the Forum was a way for her to share her concerns with other indigenous peoples who confront similar issues. She states: "For me the PFI was very useful. It gave me the opportunity to make interventions, share experiences and challenges with other indigenous brothers and sisters, and also to give me the confidence to continue because I realized I am not alone and where there is a will there is a way." In this spirit, Mary helped initiate a caucus of African women at the Forum, including a regional meeting beforehand. She said that the regional meeting was helpful because "we were able to bring up issues and present precise and collective interventions on behalf of the indigenous women who had attended the meeting." The bonds of solidarity she has formed during this process has renewed her faith that together the world's indigenous peoples and their supporters can have a major effect on the issues that they are facing.

Mary firmly believes that her ability to participate in international forums has raised the credibility of her organization and her work. Moreover, she says that this increased influence by women's groups will then have positive effects throughout the region: "In the indigenous communities in Africa, it is the women who keep and promote the culture of their people, the transmission of the language, and the knowledge of the natural environment. Thus, the political empowerment and participation in policy-making processes by indigenous women is a prerequisite to any sustainable way forward for indigenous peoples of the entire continent."

Mary's personal story has touched many hearts. Her mother was so committed to seeing Mary lead a meaningful life that she sacrificed a great deal to give Mary a good education. Mary feels it is her duty and desire to contribute something significant to her community; she has a dream to start a clinic that deals with violence against women.



FROM THE AMERICAS

## THE POWER OF INDIGENOUS YOUTH

ELAINE ALEXIE

Tetl'it Gwich'in

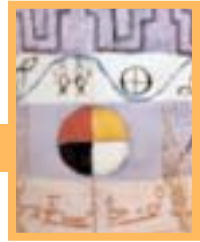
Northwest Territories, Canada

*My inspiration came from the stories, struggles and strength that the people had shown me, either from those who were just starting out or those that have been there battling at the UN for years before. Each time I meet other Indigenous Peoples I tend to remember that we are all here for the same issues, we are all confronted with similar struggles and that I am never alone.* – Elaine Alexie

One of the greatest things that I have accomplished during the Permanent Forum was that I was able to integrate my peoples' issues in several sessions and during several side events. I managed to work on a Human Rights intervention and another for the Environment, for the Gwich'in Nation, and I had several NGO groups endorse it. I had participated on a panel discussion focusing on 'Indigenous Youth Speaking Out' hosted by the UN Global Teaching and Learning Project, News and Media Division. This panel was designed to integrate the issues that Indigenous Youth face worldwide in terms of the concepts of ideology, our generation's role in the social movements and the use of media to promote our issues and how we all can improve on supporting each other. During this side event, I had convinced the organizers to show a film that I had directed and produced; 'Vadzaih: Gwich'in Youth on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge'. They agreed and screened the film. This opportunity helped to open up a discussion with the audience of the potential power of filmmaking in voicing our issues, thus encouraging more youth to become involved in this medium. This was a successful event and there were nearly 70 people in the crowd that were present. I was pretty amazed to find that this forum was a place to meet with other filmmakers from around the world. As an emerging filmmaker myself, I made every effort to network with other individuals who were using film as a means to express their issues. Film can help to promote and educate mainstream society of the social and human rights movements of indigenous peoples. A major form to integrate these messages and themes would be through a film festival for and by indigenous peoples.

Another opportunity I had at the Forum was to help get the Youth Caucus up and going with other youth. We all had our own concerns and worked together toward including input into all the mandated areas of the Forum. The best part was that the International Indigenous Youth Caucus, which participated in all of the mandated areas and gave oral presentations to present our collective statements to the Permanent Forum. For some youth members, this was their first UN event so several of us members gave the opportunity to the other youth to give the interventions to the Forum. Some of the youth did not understand the process of the Forum and those of us who did helped them along the way.

My overall experience of the Permanent Forum was fulfilling. I felt very touched and honored to meet and work with such wonderful, strong people from other places of the world. My inspiration came from stories, struggles and strength that the people had shown me, either that they were just starting out or that they have been there battling the UN for years before. Each time I meet other Indigenous Peoples I tend to remember that we are all here for the same issues, we are all confronted with similar struggles and that I am never alone. Thank you for giving me the required insight that I needed within the trainings and for giving me that stepping stone to help voice the concerns of my people. I will use the best of my ability to educate, to use it with full force for my work and to help others with my background and experience. I will do the best I can to help integrate my work and to build bridges with those around me who helped me in New York, either by filmmaking, or offering my experience in campaign strategizing, networking, or fundraising.



FROM THE AMERICAS

## MOI VS. BRASPETRO OIL

MOI ENOMENGA

Huaorani

Ecuador

Moi was born before his people, the Huaorani, made contact with the outside world. When he was eight months old, Moi's family was forced to move to a mission settlement. Within the first week at the mission more than thirty of his family had died from an epidemic of smallpox. Moi attended a mission school through his teen years. Like many others in his generation, Moi was curious about the outside world.

When he was eighteen, Moi was hired by an oil company working on land that once belonged to the Huaorani. Moi saw the devastating effects that oil development was having on communities and the environment. He quit his job and began to organize his people to confront the missionaries and oil companies that were threatening both their traditional way of life and the still unbroken forests of their homeland.

Moi singlehandedly organized all of the Huaorani communities and created the Huaorani Federation (ONHAE). Moi's tireless efforts resulted in the Huaorani gaining legal title to an area of more than 650,000 hectares of primary rainforest. Since that time, Moi has been a staunch opponent of the multinational oil companies that continue to threaten the Huaorani territory and undermine the autonomy that he helped create. Moi has also been a champion of Huaorani community ecotourism ventures for which he has won numerous awards. For the past year, Moi has been working to initiate an ambitious partnership between the Huaorani and the InterAmerican Development Bank to create a community-run ecotourism lodge and rainforest reserve. In February, Moi successfully leveraged nearly \$200,000 from the Ecuadorian government to guarantee that the project would move forward.

Moi is training to be shaman and learning the art of filmmaking in the hope of using modern technology as a tool capable of giving voice to his people and recording / preserving aspects of the threatened Huaorani culture. He is hoping to enter his own film into National Geographic's first All Roads Film Festival to highlight and support indigenous filmmakers.

Moi has also been helping investigate the massacre of a noncontacted group that took place deep within Huaorani Territory, and is helping devise strategies to prevent their extermination. Moi is also fighting illegal loggers that continue to broker deals with leaders in private. Moi has taken this case to the most senior levels of government and military in Ecuador, and was able to present the case before the international community at the Permanent Forum.

Moi came to the Permanent Forum eager to participate, with an enthusiasm that was contagious and inspiring. Oil companies have been unrelenting in their efforts to divide the Huaorani and gain access to their lands. The current president of the Huaorani Federation had recently signed an agreement that would allow the Brazilian oil company Braspetro to drill for oil on Huaorani lands, including Yasuni National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most biodiverse areas on the planet. The agreement was signed without consulting the communities and therefore illegal according to the Huaorani Federation by-laws.

Moi stayed in the United States for almost two months after the Permanent Forum, speaking at schools and other venues. Project Access arranged Moi's travel and accompanied him to New York, Boston, Ithaca and Washington D.C. Meetings were also held with NGOs, and Moi is currently in discussions with Conservation International as to ways in which they can cooperate.

Project Access also was able to raise funds so that Moi could bring over 100 community leaders together to reject the recently signed agreement with Braspetro and elect new leadership for the Huaorani Federation.



FROM THE AMERICAS

## WE CAME OUT OF THE FOREST TO TELL THE WORLD THAT WE STILL EXIST

GLORIA AND BARTOLO USHIGUA

Zapara

Ecuador, Peru

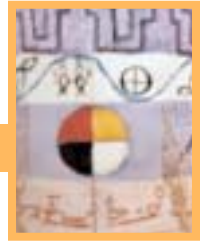
The Zapara people live in the Amazon forest on both sides of the border between Peru and Ecuador. A century ago, they were one of the more numerous peoples in the area, numbering about 20,000 people, and lived along the banks of the Curaray, Conambo, Tigre, and Villano rivers. Then the rubber companies came. Men and women were made slaves, and were sold in the ports of Iquitos and Putumayo. Those who resisted were raped and killed. The rubber companies also brought sicknesses that caused many deaths. In 1941 there was a war between Peru and Ecuador, and they divided the Zapara territory. Some of the people were forcibly relocated in Peru, and some stayed in Ecuador. They were brought to the brink of extinction. In the 1970s anthropologists declared that the Zapara were extinct.

In the mid-1990's, Oil companies began looking for oil in their territory. So they came out of the forest to tell the world that they still exist. They have preserved their culture, their way of life, and their cosmivision. They have maintained their forests and rivers. Today, in Ecuador there are 200 Zapara and in Peru about 150. They have a subsistence economy; living from hunting, fishing, and gathering wild fruits. They have small, traditional gardens and also make ceramics and weave baskets.

Bartolo Ushigua is Chief of the Zapara and has been elected to represent them in their struggle to survive. Gloria Ushigua is a Dreamer for the Zapara people. Bartolo and Gloria work closely together, as the Zapara are guided by their dreams. In just a few short years they have accomplished a great deal: they have been recognized by the Ecuadorian government; they have set up bilingual education programs; traditional healthcare is being strengthened; and they have begun the process of reuniting with their family members who were forcibly relocated in Peru over 65 years ago. In May of 2001 the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declared the Zapara culture a "Masterpiece of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity".

Although their accomplishments are amazing, the work of Gloria and Bartolo is just beginning. The Zapara are struggling to survive. They want their lands to be demarcated and legalized. They want to protect their environment, strengthen their culture and pursue their own vision of sustainable development. They want the oil companies and the governments to agree to a ten-year moratorium on road building and oil exploration on their lands.

Gloria and Bartolo worked non-stop in the workshops and at the Permanent Forum to forward the cause of the Zapara. They gave radio interviews, had productive meetings with governments and UN agencies, made interventions at the Permanent Forum, and organized strategy meetings with other Ecuadorian indigenous representatives to promote and coordinate cooperation.



FROM ASIA

## TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG

UMAKANTA MEITEI

(Manipur), India

Umakanta Meitei is General Secretary of the Threatened Indigenous Peoples Society, an indigenous organization in Manipur, India that documents human rights abuses, works to bring the perpetrators to justice and carries out human rights awareness campaigns throughout Manipur. Meitei is also a lawyer, and he was elected spokesperson of Apunba Lup, a coalition of 34 human rights organizations that are organizing peaceful protests and asking for the repeal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, which is currently being used to harass, intimidate, disappear and kill the indigenous peoples of Manipur.

On September 9th Meitei was beaten and arrested by the military. He was taken to jail and tortured. Project Access immediately demanded his unconditional release and mobilized international support. Within twenty four hours he was released. This happened because of the interventions of people he met at the Permanent Forum.

Umakanta Meitei's recent arrest highlights the strength of the networks that Project Access is building. His organization contacted us and we immediately contacted the authorities in India, as well as the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum, the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Issues, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch. We also generated support letters from other indigenous organizations in our network. Within one day, Meitei had been released without charges.

Umakanta has recovered from his injuries and has resumed his duties as spokesperson for the human rights coalition Apunba Lup. He is continuing to organize peaceful protests and gather evidence of human rights abuses being carried out by the police and military. Project Access continues to monitor the situation and encourage the government of India to peacefully resolve the situation in Manipur.