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Addressee: UN System, Member States, NGOs

Paragraph #58 Session #5 (2006)

Full Text

The Permanent Forum is deeply concerned that the problems and discrimination facing indigenous children and youth are not reflected in the Millennium Development Goals, and it urges States and United Nations organizations to develop culturally sensitive policies, programmes and projects that fully incorporate indigenous children and youth into achieving the Goals.

Comments

With its medium-term strategic plan for 2006-2009, UNICEF is using the human rights-based approach to go beyond support to specific projects and adopt a comprehensive and holistic approach that focuses on tackling the root causes of discrimination against and exclusion of indigenous children through public policies. For that reason, UNICEF encourages the indigenous organizations with which it operates to work together through alliances. Such cooperation allows for a better use of resources in larger scale projects that benefit more people than a number of small projects — unless there is a specific reason to act at a small-scale level, such as fighting an epidemic threatening a small group or the disappearance of an indigenous language.

The Russian Federation reports that in August 2006 it approved an ethnonational education policy. The document identifies the problems that indigenous peoples face in the field of education and is an update to the current policy on educational

development for numerically small indigenous peoples. The Russian Federation will provide the assistance necessary for solving these problems, both on the federal and regional levels. Some urgent tasks to be implemented in 2007-2010 are (a) increasing the professional level of teachers who specialize in the programs with an ethnocultural regional component, teach in native (non-Russian) and second (Russian) languages, or participate in the theoretical or methodological development of ethno-national education policies; (b) creating a new generation of bicultural and polycultural humanities textbooks, also for different civilizational-cultural zones of the Russian Federation; (c) creating management mechanisms to ensure equal opportunity access to quality education, taking into account local linguistic and sociocultural characteristics, also for children whose parents lead a nomadic lifestyle.

Throughout 2006 and 2007, UNESCO is organizing a series of regional youth meetings in each of the UN regions, which provides indigenous youth with an opportunity to voice their concerns. The Pacific Youth Charter, for instance, adopted in July 2006 during the first Pacific Youth Forum held in Tahiti, emphasized community involvement in resource management plans and recognition of indigenous land rights as a way of promoting stewardship of the land and sustainable development. The UNESCO Moscow Office conducted master classes and capacity-building workshops for teenage girls from indigenous communities in Azerbaijan on carpet weaving and design of souvenirs in felt. (b) The UNESCO-supported Tribal Adolescent Development Programme in Bangladesh, which targets over 300 tribal men and women, including 89 adolescents, aims at creating social awareness and actions to promote and protect Tribal Rights at the community level. (c) UNESCO New Delhi has raised awareness among decision-makers on the educational needs of tribal youth, notably to quality education in the officially recognized languages of India.

Area of Work

Indigenous Children and Youth, MDGs