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Addressee: World Health Organization, UNDP, WIPO, and Member States

Paragraph #141 Session #4 (2005)

Full Text

The Forum invites the World Health Organization, as lead agency on Millennium Development Goals 4, 5, and 6 with UNDP, the World Intellectual Property Organization and other relevant agencies and States, to partner with the Forum to organize, host and report to the Forum at its next session on methods, processes and best practices of integrating indigenous traditional knowledge, medicine, healing and other health practices in mainstream health-care systems and sensitizing health personnel concerning the protection of indigenous knowledge systems

Comments

WHO: WHO has carried out a number of activities related to indigenous health in the Latin America region. Under the AMRO program, Causananchispaj, a nongovernmental organization, carried out a study on maternity in Quechua women of Bolivia which pointed to health services failure to appreciate traditional maternal care practices of community midwives. High rates of maternal mortality in populations in two municipalities provided an impetus to propose an innovative and alternative strategy that created a linkage between public health services and traditional services by organizing midwives and developing ties between the two systems.

WHO also hosted its first meeting of Members of the Permanent Forum with its Health and Human Rights team at WHO headquarters, and included meetings with senior policy officials on issues of mental health, suicide and alcohol, HIV/AIDS, traditional medicine, MDGs, diabetes, and tobacco within indigenous communities.

Based on WHO's global strategy to improve the health of indigenous peoples (WHA Resolution 55.35), it is carrying out a number of activities at the policy and technical levels, amongst which is an upcoming project on integrating indigenous health in international and national development frameworks. The project will aim to link and integrate indigenous considerations into Poverty Reduction Strategy processes and the Millennium Development Goals by engaging with WHO's main partners.

UNDP/UNFPA: In Ecuador, UNFPA has successfully developed the Jambi Huasi health/reproductive model, which incorporates traditional medicine alongside western obstetric care. The experience includes the active involvement of indigenous people in all decisions, and is increasingly being seen by UNFPA as an effective way to integrate an intercultural perspective into reproductive health, to then be adopted by indigenous groups in the region. Please see E/C.19/2006/6/Add.7.

WIPO The protection of traditional knowledge (Tk) and traditional cultural expressions (TCE) is the subject of active policy development, norm-building and capacity-building programs at WIPO. Most recent sessions of its inter-governmental committee (IGC) have examined draft principles and objectives that could shape sui generis instruments on traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. The drafts on TK and TCE have not been adopted or endorsed by the IGC and may be developed further. They draw upon a wide range of community, national and regional experiences and have been developed over several years in consultation with Member States, indigenous peoples and other traditional and cultural communities. While the draft objectives and principles have no formal status, they illustrate some of the perspectives and approaches that are guiding work in this area, and could suggest possible frameworks for the protection of TCEs and TK. All working documents, comments, papers, studies, databases, questionnaires and other material prepared for consideration by the IGC, as well as comprehensive reports of its sessions are publicly available at: <http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/igc/documents/index.html>. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) commissioned a research paper entitled 'Analysis of Options for Implementing Disclosure of Origin

Requirements in Intellectual Property Applications' (UNCTAD/DITC/TED/2005/14), which sets out the outline for a system on disclosure requirements, and was presented to the Convention on Biological Diversity COP 8 in March 2006. Requiring disclosure of origin/source of genetic resources and associate traditional knowledge in relevant patent applications is a means of protecting traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, and the paper is intended to make an in-depth, practical and substantive contribution to policy-dialogue and consensus-building.

Work under this recommendation is under development and ongoing.

Area of Work

Traditional Knowledge